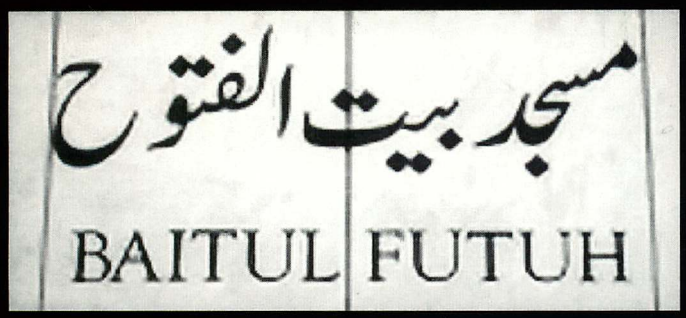
Ahmadiyya GAZETTE USA

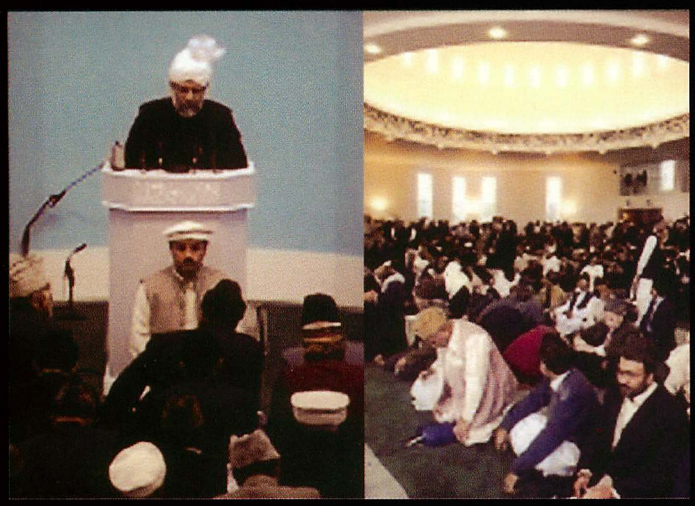
November
December 2003

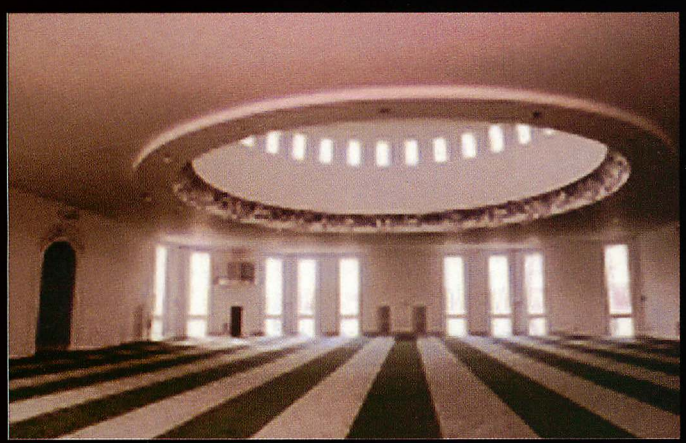
Special Edition
Quran Number

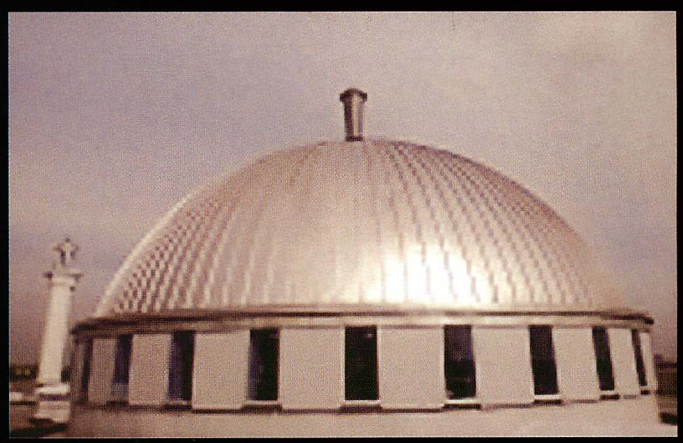
اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝
خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۝
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝
عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝

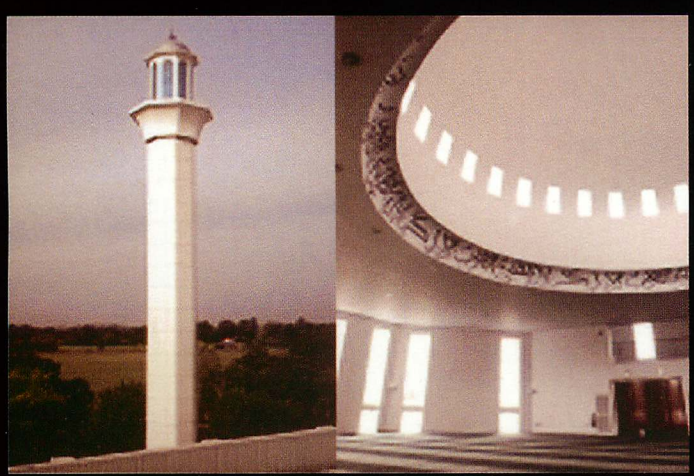
The Largest Mosque in Western Europe inaugurated by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] V on Oct. 3, 2003

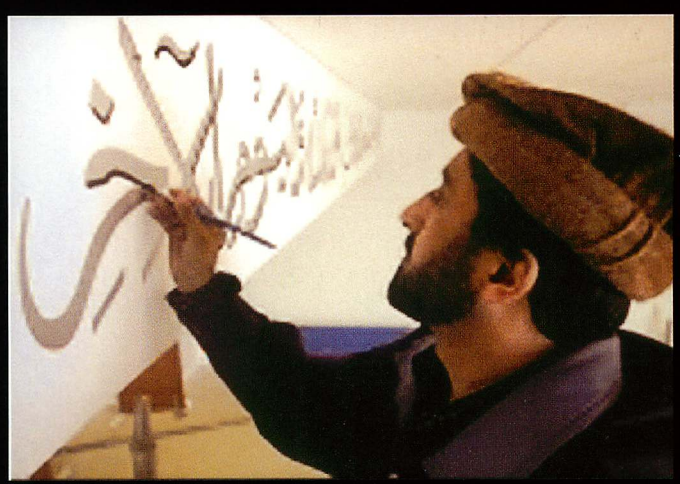












Ahmadiyya Gazette

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Silver Spring, MD 20905
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The AHMADIYYA GAZZETTE is published by the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc., at the local address 31 Sycamore Street, P. O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719. **Periodicals Postage Paid at Chauncey, Ohio.**

Postmaster: Send address changes to AHMADIYYA GAZETTE,

From the Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is the name given by God Himself to the book revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam containing the final law for mankind. The word Qur'an means a book which is meant to be read. The word also means a book or message which is meant to be conveyed and delivered to all peoples. The Qur'an is the only revealed book whose delivery or message is absolutely unrestricted; for whereas all other books are meant for specific times and specific people, the Qur'an is meant for all times and all people.

Alif, Lam, Mim. This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance for the righteous.

(Holy Qur'an 2:2-3)

This is, indeed, a noble Qur'an, in a well-preserved Book.

(Holy Qur'an 56:78 - 79)

Wherein are lasting commandments.

(Holy Qur'an 98:4)

Allah has sent down the Best Discourse - a Book whose verses are mutually supporting and repeated in diverse forms. The skins of those, who fear their Lord, do creep at its recital, then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. Such is the guidance of Allah. He guides therewith whom He pleases. And

he whom Allah adjudges astray - he shall have no guide.

(Holy Qur'an 39:24)

Ha Mim. We cite as evidence this perspicuous Book. We have made it a Book to be oft read in clear, eloquent language that you may understand. And, surely, it is safe with us in the Mother of the Book, exalted and full of wisdom.

(Holy Qur'an 43:2-5)

Verily, We have offered the trust of the Divine Law to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it. But man bore it. Indeed, he is capable of being unjust to, and neglectful of, himself. The consequence is that Allah will punish hypocritical men and hypocritical women, and idolatrous men and idolatrous women; and Allah turns in mercy to believing men and believing women; and Allah is most forgiving merciful.

(Holy Qur'an 33:73-74)

Say, 'If men and jinn should gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another.' And surely We have set forth for mankind in various ways all kinds of similitudes in this Qur'an, but most men would reject everything in respect of it but disbelief.

(Holy Qur'an 17:89-90)

Can he, then, who stands upon a clear proof from his Lord, and to testify to whose truth a witness from Him shall follow him, and who was preceded by the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy, be an imposter? Those who are the true followers of Moses believe therein, and whoever of the opposing parties disbelieve in it, the Fire shall be his promised place. So be not thou, O reader, in doubt about it. Surely, it is the truth from thy Lord; but most men believe not.

(Holy Qur'an 11:18)

And this is a Book which WE have revealed, full of blessings, to fulfil that which preceded it, and to enable thee to warn the Mother of towns and those around her. And those, who believe in the Hereafter, believe therein and they strictly observe their Prayers.

(Holy Qur'an 6:93)

Forbidden to you is the flesh of an animal which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine; and that on which is invoked the name of any other than Allah; and that which has been strangled; and that which has been beaten to death; and that which has been killed by a fall and that which has been gored to death; and that of which a wild animal has eaten, except that which you have properly slaughtered; and that which has been slaughtered at an altar as an offering to idols. And forbidden is also this that you seek to know your lot by the divining arrows. That is an act of disobedience. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of harming your religion. So fear them not, but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed MY favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion. But whoso is forced by hunger, without being willfully inclined to sin, then, surely, Allah is most forgiving, and is merciful.

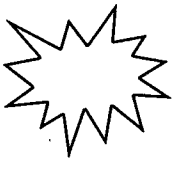
(Holy Qur'an 5:4)

And this is a Book which We have sent down; full of blessings. So follow it, and guard against evils that you may be shown mercy.

(Holy Qur'an 6:156)

And We gradually reveal of the Qur'an that which is healing and a mercy to believers; but it only adds to the loss of the wrongdoers.

(Holy Qur'an 17:83)



In the Light of Surah Fatihah

Sayings of The Promised Messiah[as]

1. *In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.*
2. *All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.*
3. *The Gracious, the Merciful.*
4. *Master of the Day of Judgement.*
5. *Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help.*
6. *Guide us in the right path ---*
7. *The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, those who have not incurred Thy displeasure, and those who have not gone astray.*

How can there be an occasion for war when no one is interdicted from fasting and praying and pilgrimage and payment of Zakat nor from chastity and piety, nor has any disbeliever drawn his sword to force the Muslims to renounce their faith or to cut them into pieces? Justice demands that the sword should be raised only to meet the sword and the pen to counter pen. Today we grieve over the falsehoods that tongues and pens have broadcast. By means of falsehoods have the Books of Allah been maligned and their truths been covered up. The mansion of the Muslim people was attacked and demolished and it became like a town with its battlements breached, or like an orchard with its plants burnt out, or like a garden with its fruits and flowers destroyed and its buds plucked and scattered, or like a country that was once prosperous whose streams have now run dry, or like fortified castles now ruined with not a vestige left, the vandals having shattered them to bits. It began to be said about the Muslim people that it had perished, and the announcers pronounced its obituary and its story was told and the publishers gave it due publicity.

But every tide must ebb and every rise has a decline. As is well known when a flood reaches a firm mountain it halts; and when night approaches daybreak its darkness is dissipated as Allah, the Supreme, has said: "Witness the night when it approaches its end, and witness the dawn when its begins to spread" (81.18-19). Allah has made the break of dawn a necessary corollary to the extreme darkness of night. Similarly in His command, "Earth, swallow up thy waters" (11.45), He has made the height of the flood a sign of its decline. Accordingly, Allah resolved to restore to the believing Muslims the days of their earlier glory and to show them that He is their Lord and that He is Rahman (Gracious) and Rahim (Compassionate) and Master of the Day of Requital, the day when the dead will be raised.

You are certainly witnessing the Rabubiyyat (Providence) of Allah, the Bountiful, during this period and His graciousness for men and beasts in the physical sphere. You see how He has provided new means and beneficial resources. Industries and manufactures abound, the like of which was not known in the past, and wonders unparalleled in the earlier ages. You find a novelty in everything that concerns a voyager or a resident, a native or a stranger, a healthy person or a sick person, a belligerent or a forbearing peace-loving one, enjoyable things or hardships, as if the world has indeed undergone a total change. Doubtless all this is the manifestation of His Supreme Provi-

dence (Rabubiyyat) and pure Graciousness (Rahmaniyyat). In the same way, you witness this Rabubiyyat (Providence) and Rahmaniyyat (Graciousness) and Rahimiyyat (Compassion) in the sphere of religion. All these matters have been facilitated for the seekers of the knowledge of the Divine and the work of propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences has been made universally easy and signs have been sent down for those who worship Allah and seek tranquility from the Presence of the Supreme Being. The sun and the moon were eclipsed in the month of Ramadhan (in 1894) and camels have been discarded as a means of rapid transport, except in rare instances, and you will in a short while see new means of transport on the Mecca-Medina road. The learned and the learners have been helped with abundance of books and many means of acquiring knowledge; mosques are frequented and worshipers are protected and ways of peace and propagation of the faith have been opened up. All this is the grace of Rahimiyyat (Compassion). We are bound to testify that these facilities and amenities had no parallel in the past ages, that no ear had heard of their like nor had any eye seen their equal.

Mark well then this Rahimiyyat of our Sublime Lord. It is due to His Rahimiyyat that we can now publish a whole lot of books on our religion in the space of days, which our predecessors could not do in years; and today we are able to get news of the farthest parts of the earth in hours, which our fore-runners could not have obtained except after years of hardships and effort. Verily, the gates of Rabubiyyat and Rahmaniyyat and Rahimiyyat have been opened wide for us for gathering every kind of good, and the ways towards it have been multiplied to such a degree that it is beyond the power of man to compute them. When did such facilities ever exist for our predecessors, preachers and callers to Islam? Verily the earth has been given a good shaking for our benefit until it has disgorged its hidden treasures. Canals have been dug and rivers have dried up and new means of transport have been invented and camels have been discarded. Our forerunners did not see the bounties that we have seen, and at every step there is a new bounty, so much so that they are beyond counting. With all this, the hardening and death of hearts have become widespread, as if all men had died and there was not left aught of spiritual insight in them, except in a very few of him whose number is negligible because of its smallness. We have realized through these bright manifestations of the attributes of Rabubiyyat (Providence), Rahmaniyyat (Graciousness), and Rahimiyyat (Compassion), which are like portents by the multiplicity of deaths by the poison of misguidance that the Day of Gathering and Resurrection is certainly nigh, nay, is at the door, as has become manifest from the appearance of these facilities and signs.

Verily Rabubiyyat, Rahmaniyyat, and Rahimiyyat are billowing like the waves of the oceans and are manifesting themselves continuously, running like mighty rivers. Thus there is not the least doubt that the hour of gathering and of resurrection has arrived. This is the way of Allah, and it has manifested itself in the time of the Companions in the choicest of all creation, the Holy Prophet of Islam. Nor is there any doubt about its being the Day of Requital and the Day of Master and the Day of the total Lordship of the Lord of Heavens and of the manifestation of its signs in the hearts of the dwellers of the earth. There is no doubt also that this day is the day of the Messiah, the Judge appointed by Allah, the Best of Judges, and verily it is the resurrection after the death of mankind ,and its parallel truly appeared in the time of Jesus and in the form of the Seal of the Prophets. Reflect hard then and be not one of the heedless.

(*Ijazul Masih*, pp. 136-160)

Honoring the Holy Quran

Excerpts from Essence of Islam, Vol I

My heart yearns every moment to kiss Thy Book and to perform a circuit around the Holy Qur'an, for it is my Ka'aba.

The Holy Quran is a casket of jewels, but people are unaware of it.

We are a witness and testify before the whole world that we have found in the Holy Qura'n the reality that leads to God. We have heard the voice of God and have witnessed the signs of the mighty arm of Him Who has revealed the Qur'an. We believe that He is the True God and is the Master of the worlds. Our heart is filled with this certainty as the ocean is filled with water. We, therefore, call everyone to this faith and to this light on the basis of our insight. We have found the true light which dispels all darkness and which renders the heart cold to all that is beside God. This is the only way by following which a person emerges from the grip of passion and the darkness of the ego as a snake comes out of its skin *[Kitabul Bariyyah, (Qadian, Ziaul Islam Press 1898); Now printed in Ruhani Khazain (London, 1984), Vol. 13, p. 47].*

It is obvious that the great merit of anything is that it should fulfill the purpose for which it has been fashioned. For instance, if a bullock is purchased for ploughing land its merit will be judged by the degree to which it is able to discharge its function of ploughing. In the same way, it is obvious that the true purpose of a heavenly Book is that it should rescue its followers from a sinful life through its teaching and influence, and its power of reform and spiritual qualities, and should bestow a pure life upon them, and after purifying them should bestow upon them full insight for the recognition of God and should establish a relationship of love and devotion between them and the peerless Being, Who is the fountain-head of all joys. In truth, this love is the root of salvation and this is the paradise on entering which all fatigue and bitterness and pain and torment are removed. Without doubt the living and perfect revealed Book is the one which should lead a seeker after God to his goal and rescuing him from a low life should lead him to the True Beloved, meeting Whom is salvation itself. It should rescue him from all doubt and should bestow such perfect understanding upon him as if he can see God. It should establish such strong relationship between God and him that he should become a faithful servant of God and God should be so benevolent towards him that He should make a distinction between him and those beside him with diverse types of His help and support and should open the gates of His understanding to him. If a book fails to

discharge this duty which is its real purpose, and seeks to establish its merit by making all sorts of irrelevant claims, it would be like a person who claims to be an expert physician, but when a patient is brought to him and he is asked to heal him, he replies that he is unable to heal him, but that he knows how to wrestle, or that he is an expert in astronomy or philosophy. It is obvious that such a person would be called a jester and would deserve the condemnation of all reasonable people. The chief purpose of a Book of God and a Messenger of God is to rescue the world from a life of sin and to establish a holy relationship between God and the world. It is not their purpose to teach people subjects of secular study and to instruct them in worldly inventions.

It is not difficult for a reasonable and just person to understand that the purpose of a Book of God is to lead people to God, and to make them believe in Him as a certainty, and to stop them from committing sin by impressing the majesty and awe of God upon their hearts. Of what use is a book which cannot cleanse a heart, nor can bestow such pure and perfect understanding as should make one hate sin? The attraction of sin is a dangerous leprosy which cannot be healed until the manifestations of the living understanding of God, and the signs of His awe and greatness and power, descend like rain and until a person perceives God with His terrible powers as a goat perceives a tiger that is only two steps away from it. Man needs to be freed from the fatal passion of sin. The greatness of God should so occupy his heart that it should rid him of the overpowering desire of passion which falls upon him like lightning and instantly consumes his store of righteousness. Those impure passions which attack repeatedly like epilepsy and destroy all sense of piety cannot be wiped out by a self-conceived impression of God, nor can they be suppressed by one's own thinking, or be blocked by an atonement whose suffering has not been experienced by one. This is not a matter of indifference, but in the estimation of a wise person it is worthy of consideration above all else as to how he might safeguard himself against the ruin which confronts him on account of his daring and his lack of relationship with God, the root of which is sin and disobedience. It is obvious that a person cannot give up a certain pleasure for the sake of conjecture. It is only a certainty that can rescue one from another certainty. For instance, if we are certain that there are a number of deer in a forest whom we can easily catch, we are incited by that certainty to enter the forest for that purpose; but if we are also certain that there are half a hundred lions in the forest and thousands of pythons, we would be dissuaded from making the attempt. Thus sin cannot be avoided without this degree of certainty. It is only iron that can break iron. There should be that certainty of the greatness and awe of God which should tear up the curtains of heedlessness, and should make the body tremble, and should make death appear near. The heart should be so overcome by fear that all relationship with the sinful ego should be cut asunder and one should be drawn by hidden hands towards God and the heart should be filled with certainty that God Who is truly present does not leave a daring offender without punishment. What shall a seeker after true purity do with a book that does not fill this need?

I wish to convey it to everyone that the Holy Qur'an is the Book which fills all these needs. Through it a person is drawn to God and his heart grows cold to the love of the world. By following it, God, Who is hidden beyond hidden, in the end manifests Himself and displays those powers of which outsiders have no notion and informs of His existence by the affirmation: "I am present." But the Vedas certainly do not possess this quality. They are like a worn out bundle whose owner is dead or is not trace-

able. The Permeshwar towards whom the Vedas call is not proved to be living. Indeed the Vedas put forward no proof that their Permeshwar exists. The misleading teaching of the Vedas has rendered it doubtful that one could find the Creator through His creation; inasmuch as, according to the teachings of the Vedas, souls and particles are all eternal and uncreated, then how can one discover the Creator through that which is uncreated? The Vedas also shut the door of Divine revelation and deny the fresh Signs of God. According to the Vedas, Permeshwar cannot display a Sign in support of His special servants which should be beyond the knowledge or experience of the average person. The utmost that can be said about the Vedas is that they affirm the existence of God like an average being, and do not put forward any certain proof in support of the existence of God. In short the Vedas cannot bestow that understanding which comes fresh from God and conveys a person from earth to heaven, but our observation and experience and of those who have passed before us, is witness that the Holy Qur'an draws its true follower to itself through its spiritual effect and its inherent light and illumines his heart, and then by displaying great signs creates such a strong relationship with God as cannot be cut asunder by a sharp sword. It opens the eye of the heart and banks up the dirty spring of sin and honours one with the delicious converse of God and discloses that which is hidden and helps acceptance of prayer and gives information of it. God Almighty, through His terrible signs, makes it manifest to everyone who opposes a true follower of the Holy Qur'an that He is with that servant of His who follows His Word *[Chashma Marifat, (Qadian, Anwar Ahmadiyyah Press, 1908); Now published in Ruhani Khazain (London, 1984), Vol. 23., pp. 291-295].*

God, in whose meeting is man's salvation and eternal happiness, cannot be found without following the Holy Qur'an. Would that people could see that which I have seen and they could hear that which I have heard and give up following stories and run towards reality. The means of obtaining perfect knowledge through which one can see God, and the cleansing water which removes all doubts, and the mirror through which one can behold that High Being, is the converse with God which I have just mentioned. He whose soul seeks the truth should arise and search for it. I say truly that if souls were inspired by true search and hearts felt true thirst, people would look for this way and would search for it. I assure the seekers that Islam alone gives the good news of this way for other people have since long sealed up the possibility of revelation. Be sure that this seal is not set by God, but as man has deprived himself of this favour, he seeks excuses for its absence. As it is not possible that we should be able to see without eyes or should be able to hear without ears or should be able to speak without a tongue, in the same way, it is not possible that we should be able to behold the countenance of the Beloved without the Holy Qur'an. I was young and am now old, but I have found no one who might have drunk of this clear understanding without this holy fountain *[Islami Usul ki Philosophy, now printed in Ruhani Khazain (London, 1984), Vol. 10, pp. 128-129].*

The straight path and the principal means which is full of the lights of certainty, and is the perfect guide for our spiritual welfare and our intellectual progress, is the Holy Qur'an, which is charged with the settlement of all the religious contests of the world. It contains a large quantity of the water of life for us and comprises many rare and priceless jewels which are hidden in it and are being displayed every day. It is an excellent touchstone whereby we can distinguish between truth and falsehood. It is the one bright lamp which shows the way of truth. Without

doubt the hearts of those who have a relationship with the straight path are drawn to the Holy Qur'an. God has so fashioned their hearts that they lean towards their Beloved like a lover and find no rest elsewhere, and hearing a plain and clear directive from Him, they listen to nothing else. They accept joyfully and eagerly every verity contained in it. In the end it becomes the means of illumination of the heart and lighting up the conscience and of wonderful disclosures. It leads everyone to the heights of progress according to their capacities. The righteous have always been in need of walking in the light of the Holy Qur'an. Whenever Islam has been confronted with any other religion in consequence of some new condition of the age, the sharp and effective instrument that has immediately come to hand is the Holy Qur'an. In the same way, whenever philosophic thought has been given publicity in opposition to it, the Holy Qur'an has destroyed that poisonous plant and has so humiliated it as to provide a mirror to its students which shows up that true philosophy which is contained in the Holy Qur'an. In the modern age, when Christian missionaries started their propaganda and made an attempt to draw away unintelligent and ignorant people from the Unity of God and to make them worship a humble creature and employed every kind of sophistry for dressing up their doubtful ideas and thus created a storm in India, it was the Holy Qur'an which repelled them so that they are not now able to face an intelligent person and their extensive apologetics have been folded up like a piece of paper. *[Izalai Auhan, (Amritsar, Riyaz Hind Press 1308 A.H.); now published in Ruhani Khazain (London, 1984), Vol. 3, pp. 524-525].*

A Prayer that Must Precede the Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

From THE HOLY QURAN *with English Translation and Commentary* by Hazrat Alhaj Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad[ra] (introduction to Surah Fatiha):

Muslims are supposed to always begin the reading of the Holy Book with a short prayer, soliciting God's protection against Satan. God says:

And when thou recitest the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the rejected. (16:99)

Now, refuge or protection implies:

1. that no evil should befall us;
2. that no good should escape us; and
3. that after we have attained goodness, we may not relapse into evil.

Thus, by seeking the protection of God while reciting the Qur'an we pray, *firstly*, that we may not miss any teaching of the Qur'an through weakness or negligence or in consequence of our sins, or under the influence of evil company; *secondly*, that we may not fail to understand rightly any teaching of the Qur'an; *thirdly*, that, having understood, we may not relapse into ignorance again. The prescribed words for the prayer are:

'I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the rejected,'

which must precede every recitation of the Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an: Forever Preserved

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian, (Al-Hijr, 15:10)

This verse of the Holy Qur'an promises that its text has been safe-guarded in its original form by a divine plan for all times to come.

Commentary

This verse furnishes a powerful proof of the truth of the Qur'an and of its divine origin. In fact, the promise about the preservation of the Qur'an made in this verse has been so remarkably fulfilled that even if there had been no other proof of the truth of Islam, this alone would have sufficed to establish its divine origin.

Verse 8 of this Sura contains the demand, mockingly made by disbelievers, that if the Qur'an were really as grand a book as it was claimed to be, it ought to have descended under the guardianship of angels. This ridicule of disbelievers has been answered in the present verse, which emphatically says that the Qur'an is indeed a sublime book and that God Himself has undertaken to act as its Guardian and that He will always protect it against every kind of corruption and interference. And in order that this promise about the protection of the Qur'an may gain still more force, particles expressive of special emphasis, such as 'Anna' (verily We) and 'Nahnou' (Ourselves) and again 'Anna' followed by 'Lam' (most surely) have been used in this verse. Thus the claim has been made in the most emphatic and forceful language.

The statement that God Himself is the Guardian of the Qur'an does not mean that angels do not guard it. They also do so, for when the master himself is guarding a thing, the servants must also be necessarily engaged in that service. By saying, 'Most surely We will be its Guardian,' God, however, points to the fact that there are certain peculiarities of the Qur'an which are beyond the power of angels to guard, and therefore God Himself has undertaken to do that work.

The means adopted to safeguard the purity of the text of the Qur'an have been briefly referred to in verse 2 in the memorable words 'Al-kitab' (the written Book) and 'Quran e Mubeen' (the illuminating Recital) signifying: (a) that every verse of the Qur'an was committed to writing as soon as it was revealed and this writing was most tenaciously preserved and (b) that it was committed to memory as soon as revealed by a number of Muslims. And this pious practice has increasingly continued so much so that in the past centuries hundreds of thousands of Muslims have had the entire Qur'an literally on the tips of their tongues. Add to this the fact that from the very beginning of Islam the recital of parts of the Qur'an in the five daily Prayers was made obligatory.

Again, it is not only the text of the Qur'an that has been preserved intact by God. He has provided for the preservation of its spirit also. This has been done by raising divinely inspired Reformers among the

Muslims from time to time. These Reformers, known in Islamic terminology as Mujaddids, receive revelations from God and interpret and explain the true meaning of the Quranic text. Such Reformers appeared among the followers of other religions also, but that was only for so long as such Scriptures served as guides for their followers. After the advent of Islam, however, all other religious systems and their Scriptures, which were intended only for specific periods and specific peoples, became abrogated and divinely inspired Reformers ceased to appear among them. Now, therefore, the Qur'an alone among all revealed Scriptures of the world holds the field as a living book and hence divinely inspired. Reformers now appear only among the followers of Islam. The appearance of such reformers in itself constitutes proof of the living power of a religion and its Scripture inasmuch as they are really the fruit of their religion and their appearance proves its efficacy.

The question here arises, if the Scriptures revealed to the previous Prophets have not been preserved in their original purity, what guarantee is there to believe that the Qur'an would enjoy permanent security? In this connection, it should be noted that the promise of protection made by God in this verse mentions the word 'Al Zikr' (rendered in the text as "this Exhortation") and not the Qur'an or any other word; and herein lies the answer to the above question. For, to become deserving of the permanent protection of God it is essential that the divine revelation should be 'Al Zikr' of which the necessary attributes are: (1) that it should establish a close and permanent relationship between man and his Maker, inspiring in the former constant remembrance of God, the word 'Zikr' meaning remembering; and (2) that it should elevate man to a state where God may also remember him or in other words favor him with His words and with heavenly help, the word 'Zikr' also meaning eminence. The verse under comment thus purports to mean that God undertakes to protect any Scripture so long as it serves the above two purposes. But when, through changes in the conditions and circumstances of man, any Scripture ceases to perform these functions and God, in infallible wisdom, deems it necessary to reveal another Scripture, He naturally ceases to extend His protection to earlier revelations.

Announcement Concerning Tahir Foundation

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Khamis^{aba}, in his speech on the second day of Jalsa UK 2003, urged those members of Jama'at who are well versed in Urdu as well as in English languages and can translate material from Urdu to English to come forward and volunteer themselves so that the work of translating the Jama'at literature be accomplished in an efficient manner. In this regard, members of USA Jama'at are requested to submit their names at the following address:

Ahsanullah Zafar,
Amir Jama'at Ahmadiyya, USA
15000 Good Hope Road,
Silver Spring, MD 20905

The Nature of Quranic Teachings

Hazrat Muhammad Zafrullah Khan[ra]

Islam, like the other great religions, more particularly the other two semitic faiths, Judaism and Christianity, with whom it has much in common, bases itself on revelation.

But there is a vital distinction. The Holy Qur'an is a record solely of the verbal revelations received by the Holy Prophet of Islam during a period of over twenty years. It is thus, according to Muslim belief, the Very Word of God. The Holy Prophet's own interpretation and exposition of the revelations are not set out in the Qur'an. These are contained in other collections.

The claim of the Qur'an is that it furnishes guidance on all fundamentals, whether it matters of principle, practice or vital detail, for all time. It opens up vast fields for the pursuit of knowledge and research, but the question I desire to address myself to at the outset is to what extent does it bind and regulate and what does it leave free for the exercise of discretion, experiment, trial and error? I have deliberately avoided the use of the expression "reason" in this context, lest it should give rise to misunderstanding. For, according to the Qur'an, reason governs both in the realm of pure faith and in the fields of discretion and experiment. The Qur'an invites mankind to faith *through* the exercise of reason. It is full of appeals, invitations, admonitions and exhortations to "consider," "ponder," "reflect," and "understand." It repeatedly draws attention to the phenomena of nature and invites the "people of understanding and wisdom" to reflect upon the "signs" contained therein and to draw lessons from them. For instance, the Holy Prophet was commanded and through him, of course, the Muslims:

"Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the way that is best. Surely thy Lord knows the best who has strayed from His path and He knows those who are rightly guided" (16:126).

The way to guidance is through wisdom and understanding:

"God grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good; and none would be reminded save those endowed with understanding" (2:270).

As an illustrations of these admonitions and exhortations, let me draw attention to the following:

"And one of His Signs is this, that He has created mates for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are signs

for a people who will reflect" (30:22).

"And among His Signs is the creation of the Heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge" (30: :23).

"And among His Signs is your sleep by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty. In that surely are signs for a people who hear" (30:24).

"And one of His Signs is this, that He shows you the lightning as a source of fear and hope, and He sends down water from the sky, and quickens therewith the earth after its death. In that surely are signs for a people who understand" (30:25).

And again:

"God it is who has subjected to you the oceans that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you may seek his bounty, and that you may be grateful. And He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth: all this is from Him. In that surely are signs for a people who reflect" (14:12-13).

"This is a Book We have revealed to thee, full of blessings, that they may reflect over it verses and that those gifted with understanding may take heed" (28:30).

Instances could be multiplied, but these should suffice. Thus the question I have posed is not what is governed and regulated by Revelation and what is left to Reason. The question is what is governed and regulated by Revelation (the truth of which Reason has affirmed) and what is left to discretion and experiment?

The Qur'an itself makes that distinction:

"O children of Adam: if Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing My Signs unto you, then who so shall fear God and do good, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve\" (7:36).

On the other hand, there is the admonition:

"Ye who believe do not enquire concerning matters on which directions given to you might prove burdensome to you ... God has left them out. God is most Forgiving, Forbearing. A people before you asked about such things, but then they became disbelievers therein" (5:102-103).

Thus we have the truth emphasized that Divine guidance is always completely beneficent and must, therefore, be followed, but that we must not seek to restrict the sphere of speculation, discretion and experimentation.

In fundamentals, the harm resulting from the adoption of an injurious or wrong course may be irremediable or very far-reaching. Concerning such matters, guidance has been furnished in the Revelation. Even that guidance is not more rigid than is absolutely essential for the organization of human society on a beneficent pattern and for the regulation of human conduct in conformity with such a pattern. In most matters the ordinances of the Shariat possess the healthy quality of elasticity. It is the sophists and the jurists who have sought to make them unduly rigid. But outside these limits Muslims are not only left free to exercise their discretion and to apply the lessons of experience and observation, but are constantly and repeatedly exhorted to do so.

Take the important matter of what has come to be known as a Constitution, that is the fundamental law governing and regulating the political, executive, legislative, and judicial functions of the State. The Qur'an has laid down the fundamental principles with great emphasis, but has left it to the people concerned to make them effective in accordance with their own needs, requirements, limitations, and circumstances.

The fundamental principles

are thus expressed:

"God commands you that you entrust political authority to those who are best capable of discharging this trust and that when you are called upon to judge between the people you judge with justice and equity. Surely excellent is that with which God admonishes you. God is All- Hearing, All-Seeing" (4:59).

Several principles are clearly deducible from this emphatic injunction. First, that under God, sovereignty rests with the people. It is for the people to entrust various aspects of political authority into the hands of persons who are deemed most capable of carrying them into effect. Attention is thus drawn to the very important principle that the exercise of the franchise and the performance of the functions of representation and of executive and judicial office are all in the nature of a sacred trust and must be approached and carried out in that spirit. This exhortation at once lifts politics from the arena of controversy, conflict, and sordid maneuver into the exalted sphere of a moral and spiritual function. The proper exercise of the franchise is the key to the successful working of democracy. This is emphasized in mandatory language in the Qur'an.

Next, the independence and integrity of the judicial office is stressed. I have had occasion recently to put together my ideas on "The Concept of Justice in Islam" in an article. I need not enlarge upon the subject here.

The verse then goes on to caution the Muslims that they may be tempted from time to time to depart from these principles, but that they would do well always to adhere to them as "God's admonition furnishes the best guidance."

Finally, there is the warning that God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. He is always on the watch. He hears the cry of the afflicted and the oppressed and watches the conduct of all His creatures. We must not expect to enjoy the benefits of a system we do not practice, nor can we hope to escape the consequences and penalties flowing from wrongdoing, especially in connection with the discharge of so sacred a trust as the benign and benevolent governance of His creatures and making provision for their true welfare and their constant progress and advancement.

In addition to laying down principles and furnishing guidance the Qur'an makes provision for the training of Muslims in the exercise of these functions. The Holy Prophet was exhorted to make his decisions after consultation with and seeking advice from representative Muslims.

"It is by the great mercy of God that thou (i.e., the Prophet) art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hard-hearted they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So forbear and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in matters of administration; and when thou hast determined the matter, then put thy trust in God. Surely God loves those who put their trust in Him" (3:160).

Mutual consultation and advice is described in the Qur'an as a characteristic of the Muslims:

"Those who harken to their Lord and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of whatsoever We have provided for them" (42:39).

It was this system and this training which converted so many unlettered and untutored dwellers of the desert into such efficient executives and administrators in so short a time in the early years of Islam. Of much greater importance, however, than these fundamental principles of ~~constitution, etc., is today~~ the question: "What is the kind of society that Islam seeks to set up?"

The answer to the question I

have just posed can run into great length. I shall confine myself to a brief outline for the benefit of the average Westerner. The scholar already knows a great deal more about these matters than I can lay pretension to. Our purpose in these discussions, I conceive, is not so much to stimulate scholarship and research as to promote better understanding of the values that, in the last resort, and particularly in a period of stresses and crises, are likely to influence the thought and conduct of the average person.

The central fundamental point or doctrine, if you prefer the expression, in Islam is the Unity of God. Everything else, as you say here, stems from that. God is One: He is also Unity. All else proceeds from Him and depends upon Him for support, sustenance, and advancement.

All mankind are His creatures and servants. Islam recognizes no kind of privilege based upon race, family, color, office, wealth, etc. The only badge of nobility, as it were, is the degree of righteousness of a person's life.

"O mankind, We have created you from man and woman... And We have made you peoples and tribes that you may recognize one another more easily. Verily, the most honorable among you in the sight of God, is he who is most righteous among you. Surely, God is All- Knowing, All-Aware" (49:14).

There is a fundamental unity in the Universe, and all this stresses the control and power of God.

"Man and the Universe have been created with a purpose" (45:23 and 46:4).

The Qur'an stresses that man as such (not any particular man or group) is God's Vicegerent upon earth. (2:30-31; 6:166).

"The universe and all that is in it has been made subservient to man" (45:13-14).

This opens out a vast field for research and the pursuit of knowledge for the benefit of *all mankind.* As Islam does not recognize any classes, nor any privilege based upon any class distinctions, its economic and social values are all designed to establish in practice the brotherhood of man on a basis of equality and dignity. In fact, mankind are warned that if they will not cultivate true love for each other and practice sincere brotherhood, they may be pushed to the "brink of a pit of fire."

"Remember the favour of God which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers: and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does God explain to you His Signs that you may be guided" (2:104).

In the social sphere, Islam has sought to emphasize the spirit of brotherhood and equality by instituting and insisting upon simple standards and dispensing with formality and ceremonial.

"Liquor and all intoxicants, all well as gambling, are prohibited and moderation is enjoined in the matter of food and drink. It is pointed out that the use of intoxicants and indulgence in gambling would foster enmity and hatred and neglect of prayer and remembrance of God" (5:91-92).

"Eat and drink and be moderate, He loves not the immoderate" (7:32).

The Muslims in their "golden age," if the use of the expression may be permitted, have not always adhered to the spirit of Islamic injunctions and teachings in this regard. Nevertheless, social intercourse in Islamic society has throughout been perfectly easy and free and a consciousness of brotherhood and equality has always been kept alive. The purely religious ordinances of Islam have largely helped to keep this consciousness alive. The five daily services in the Mosques, where

no discrimination of any sort is permitted, for instance, by way of allotment of seats or pews and access is open to all alike, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca where all pilgrims are uniformly clad in two white sheets, the annual fast extending over a month with its uniform discipline, attend in the same direction.

It is perhaps in the economic sphere that in the present age the values sought to be inculcated by Islam would arouse the keenest interest.

Islam starts from the fundamental fact that the original sources of wealth, the earth and its capacities and treasures, the sun, moon, the stars, the atmosphere, clouds, rain, etc., are the gifts of God to all mankind and have been subordinated to man and subjected to his service. There can, therefore, be no property in them.

Wealth is produced by the application of knowledge and skill to, and the utilization of, these sources. This involves the use of skill, capital, and labor. The wealth produced in consequence is, therefore, divisible not only between skill, capital, and labor, but must also by shared by the community as a whole, as legatees of God's bounties which are the original sources of all wealth. This share of the community is recovered through a capital levy called the *Zakat.* The root of the word is *Zakka,* i.e., "he purified," or "he fostered." This levy has both characters. By separating the share of the community it purifies the rest and makes the rest lawful for division between skill, capital, and labor. The proceeds of this levy are to be devoted towards purposes designed to foster the welfare of the community; e.g., the relief of poverty and distress, the provision of public works for the benefit of the community at large, the maintenance of scholars and research workers and those who devote themselves to the service of man, the provision of capital for those who possess useful skills, but lack the necessary capital to put them into practice, etc.

The Qur'an indicates the purposes of the *Zakat* in:

"Take out of their wealth alms so that thou mayest through it purify them and foster their welfare" (9:103).

The Prophet himself has indicated the character of the *Zakat* in the words:

"An alms that is *levied* on the well-to-do and is *returned* to those in need."

It is a legal levy imposed by the State and is to be distinguished from public and private charity to which the Muslims are repeatedly and emphatically exhorted in the Qur'an.

With regard to the use and application of wealth, Islam aims at the widest possible distribution and constant circulation. The *Zakat* just referred to is one of the means of securing such distribution and circulation. The emphasis on public and private charity is another. (4:37-41; 2:262-275).

But there are other ordinances designed with the same object. Hoarding of wealth, *Kanz,* and holding back, *Bukhl,* are mostly severely condemned as heinous sins entailing the defeat of their own purpose and powerful penalties (9:34-35, 104; 4:37-38). The freest and widest application of wealth, talent, knowledge, etc. "in the way of God", i.e., in the service of man, are insisted upon as an indispensable means of promoting *falah,* i.e., individual and national prosperity.

"Behold, you are those who are called upon to spend in the way of God, and of you there are some who hold back, but whoso holds back is being miserly only against his own self. God is Self-Sufficient, it is you who are needy. If you turn away, He will bring in your stead a people other than you. Then they will not be like you" (47:39).

But extravagance is forbidden, for extravagance leads man

into evil company and the misuse of God's bounties" (17:28). It is spending "in the way of God," to win God's favor, that is enjoined. Indeed, it is pointed out that in the substance of the well to do the needy have a share to which they are entitled.

"In their wealth was a share for those who could express their needs and those who could not" (51:20).

"So give to the kinsman his due and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the favour of God. It is they who will prosper" (30:39).

"Interest is prohibited: *it restricts circulation, accumulates wealth in a few hands and fosters wars*" (2:276-280).

Trade, commerce, partnership, joint stock companies, and other commercial ventures and activities are not restricted. The principle is that a person may invest his money in any legitimate venture which puts wealth into circulation, promotes employment, and fosters the welfare of the community. What is prohibited is a transaction the essence of which is that one person advances money or makes a loan in kind with a stipulation that he must receive a fixed return for the use of the money or the community lent, irrespective of what may happen to the subject matter of the loan. So long as the transaction is one which is designed to foster the welfare of the community through the circulation of wealth and the promotion of industry or commerce, and the person participating in it by way of investing money (or goods as the case may be) accepts the risk of loss and becomes entitled also to share in the profits, there is no objection.

Another device aimed at breaking up accumulations of property or wealth and securing a wide distribution is the Islamic system of inheritance. While a person is alive and in good health, he may dispose of his property as he may choose, subject to the moral principles of charity and beneficence inculcated by Islam. His power of bequest, however, is strictly limited. He may by Will dispose of no more than a maximum of one-third of his property and may direct its distribution for charity or otherwise through testamentary disposition. The remaining two- thirds or a larger share, after the testamentary dispositions have been satisfied, must be distributed among his heirs in specified shares. Under the Islamic law of inheritance, the number of heirs is apt to be quite numerous. Should a man die leaving him surviving father, mother, widow, sons and daughters, everyone of them would be an heir and would receive a prescribed share in the inheritance. Among the same category of heirs, there is no preference, nor is there any such discrimination as, for instance, the law of primogeniture. Men and women are all heirs, though for the reason to be stated immediately, a woman's share is generally one-half of a man's share in the same degree of heirs. The reason for this is that under the Islamic social and economic systems, the whole responsibility for the maintenance of the family rests upon the father and not upon the mother. Even should it happen, as is sometimes the case, that the mother has a larger income in her own right than the father, the legal responsibility for the maintenance of the family rests upon the father. The mother is under no legal obligation to make any contribution towards the family expenses.

The Islamic system of inheritance thus breaks up wealth in each generation. The object is that a large number should receive a small competence rather than that a single heir, or a small number, should inherit wealth in large quantities. It does not, however, follow that small parcels of land or real estate must be divided between all the heirs. The State is free to make any regulation which would restrict the subdivision of property through inheritance while safeguarding the legal title of each heir to receive his or her share in cash or in some other

form.

Islam recognizes individual ownership and private property and gives it full legal protection. It does not 'restrict' wealth, but regulates the modes of its acquisition and the purposes to which it must or may be applied.

In other words, it recognizes a certain *degree* of ownership in the individual. It permits its use and enjoyment *within certain limits.* It makes ownership a sort of stewardship to be administered and discharged as a trust.

"Each one of you is a steward (lit.: a shepherd) and is accountable for his charge." (The Holy Prophet of Islam).

Islam recognizes and indeed stresses the diversity of talents, skills, initiative, enterprise, etc. And consequently of earnings and rewards and a *disparity* of wealth and worldly means (16:72). In fact, a certain diversity is part of the purpose of life. Like all other limitations and qualifications Islam seeks to employ this diversity for the purpose of promoting social co-operation on a beneficent basis.

"Co-operate with each other in virtue and righteousness and do not co- operate in sin and transgression and fear God. Verily God is severe in chastisement.

It is through such co-operation and not through coveting what others excel in, that healthy progress is to be achieved" (4:33).

Islam takes note of and encourages the spirit of competition but seeks to divert it into wholly beneficent channels:

"Everyone has a goal which dominates him: Vie then, with one another in good deeds" (2:149).

Reproduced and Edited from The Muslim Sunrise, Summer 1995

Editorial Announcemnt

We are thankful to all those who send us articles for publishing in Ahmadiyya Gazette USA. May Allah give them reward for their sincerety. At this time, we want to extend our invitation to all the writers for Ahmadiyya Gazette, USA to write on the following special topics for the year 2004.

January	*Salat (Prayers)*	*July*	*Tarbiyyat issues in Jamaat*
February	*Musleh Maud[ra]*	*August*	*Prayers and Jamaat*
March	*Zikar-e-Habib*	*September*	*Seeratun Nabi*
April-May	*Khalifatul Masih[rh] IV*	*October*	*Waqf-e-Jadid*
June	*Ahmadiyyat in USA*	*Nov. -Dec.*	*Attributes of Allah*

Please send us by mail at the address given below or email us at **gazetteusa@yahoo.com**, any articles on the above topics or any others which can be of general interest to a large number of audience.

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The Qur'an - History of Text

Arif Humayun

Unlike the Old and the New Testaments, the Qur'an has been preserved in its entirety. The Quranic revelations were memorized and recorded immediately and simultaneously upon their revelation. The Qur'an was revealed by God to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) over a period of about 23 years. The revelations were conveyed to the Prophet in small segments by the angel Gabriel who made the Prophet recite the revealed verses in his presence.

From the very outset, the Prophet employed two independent but mutually complementary methods for preserving the revelations. The two methods used for this purpose were memorization and inscription. Besides ensuring independently the transmission of the revelation, the two methods also served as internal checks, thus ensuring its accurate preservation.

Islamic traditions record that the Prophet employed four principal teachers whom he personally instructed in memorizing the revelations. By this method, even the correct pronunciation of the message was preserved. These teachers would then help others in their memorization of the revealed verses. Moreover, as the revelations were received, they were also recited in the five daily prayers. Thus, the main mode of preservation and transmission of the Quranic revelations was through memorization. Interestingly, the Qur'an was literally preserved by being written on the hearts of people, as prophesied in the Bible:

"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days says the Lord: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (1)

Thus, the memorization process proved to be the single, most effective method for preserving Quranic revelation. Moreover, the style in which the Quran was revealed is also in total conformity with Isaiah's prophecy about the new law being revealed as:

"For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. Nay, but by men of strange lips and with an alien tongue, the Lord will speak to His people to whom He has said" (2)

Alternately, the revelation was also recorded in written form, soon after its receipt. Islamic tradition records that fifteen scribes were employed by the Prophet for preserving the revelations in writing from the Prophet's dictation. This method of preservation was to serve as a backup.

Once a year during the month of Ramadan (the Muslim month of fasting), the angel Gabriel would recite the entire revelation, revealed up to that time with the Prophet. During the last Ramadan, after the revelations had been completed, the angel recited the entire Quranic revelation to the Prophet twice.(3) This regular annual recitation was also meant to arrange the revelations in their present order.

At the time of the Prophet's

death, the number of people who had memorized the entire Qur'an exceeded one hundred thousand. (4) The process of new converts accepting Islam continued as did the process of memorizing the entire Qur'an. The Qur'an propagated through the process of memorization ensured its survival in its pristine purity. During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr (the first Caliph after the Prophet's death), over 500 people who knew the entire Qur'an by heart, were killed in a battle. This tragic event served as the catalyst to accelerate the process of preserving the written Quranic revelation as an alternative method of safeguarding God's message. Thereupon, the Caliph Abu Bakr appointed a commission and charged it with the task of compiling the Quranic revelations into one volume. The commission assembled the scribes employed by the Prophet for recording the revelations and compiled the recorded texts into one volume. The accuracy of the text of this volume was checked by the Prophet's disciples who had committed the entire Qur'an to their memory as well as from the written scripts. This one volume compilation was completed within two years of the Prophet's death.

The third Caliph, Uthman, had the same commission prepare seven additional copies of the Qur'an. After being thoroughly checked for accuracy, these copies were distributed throughout the Muslim world. Some of these copies still survive. One such copy is preserved in a Turkish Museum, which has been used by leading authorities to compare the current Quranic text. After additional copies of the Qur'an were compiled and distributed throughout the Muslim world, the third Caliph Uthman considered it essential that the original recording be destroyed, due to the following reasons:

1. Because of their uniqueness, they might be revered by people to the point of worship, thus potentially defeating the essence of Islam.
2. They might be desecrated and also serve as a tool for blackmail if they fell into enemy hands.

Contrasting the compilation of the Old and New Testaments with that of the Qur'an, Divine designs become more evident. Muslims can claim that the Qur'an around the world is uniform, even in its minutest detail. It is exactly the same as was originally revealed to the Holy Prophet and which was assembled in one volume by the first Caliph, Abu Bakr. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, among other independent sources, testifies to this fact (5) and concedes this point to the Muslims. The authenticity of the Qur'an is beyond the slightest shadow of doubt. It had to be so because God Himself has promised to safeguard the integrity of His Word. (6)

"Verily, it is We Who have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We are its Guardians."

The Qur'an has the additional unique distinction among all other scriptures of being an entirely verbal revelation. That, in itself, is a guarantee that it would not be perverted or twisted. All non-Muslim scholars who have researched into the integrity of the text of the Holy Qur'an agree that it is an exact and accurate version of the verbal revelation that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam[sa], claimed that God had vouchsafed to him. This Divine guarantee of safeguarding the Qur'an is not confined to preserving the integrity of the text alone. It extends to all factors that bear upon the preservation of the Qur'an as the perfect source of Divine guidance for the whole of mankind, for all times. For instance, it is guaranteed that the language in which it was revealed, namely Arabic, would always continue to be a living language in current use, so that no difficulty might be met with in determining and comprehending the meaning of the Quran. Arabic is today spoken and written over a much greater area of the earth and by many hundred times the number of

people than was the case when Qur'an was revealed. Besides, the Holy Prophet predicted that at the beginning of every century, God Almighty would raise someone, from among his followers, who would set forth from the Qur'an the guidance that may be needed by mankind from time to time. In the case of no other scriptures has the integrity of its text, its language and its guidance, been maintained.

That Divine Challenge put forth almost 1400 years ago is still valid today. The very fact that no other versions of the Qur'an exists is overwhelming evidence of its Divine protection. M. Bucaille in his book *The Bible, The Quran and Science* testifies to the above facts and some excerpts from his book follow:

'If we now examine the teachings of Muslim exegetes, we shall see that they present the Qur'an in quite a different manner. About fourteen centuries ago at a meditation retreat near Mecca, Muhammad received the first message through the Archangel Gabriel. After a long period of silence, the first message was followed by successive revelations spanning a period of some twenty years. They were not only transcribed while the Prophet was still alive, but also recited by heart by his early followers and later by the many believers who had gathered around him. After his death (in 632 A.D.), the various elements were brought together in a book, henceforth known as The Qur'an. It contains the Word of God to the exclusion of any human addition. The manuscripts we possess from the first century of Islam authenticate today's text. (7)

Islam has its equivalent of the Gospels in the Ahadiths. These are the collected sayings of Muhammad and the story of his deeds. The Gospels are nothing other than this for Jesus. The first collections of Ahadiths were written decades after the death of Muhammad, just as the Gospels were written decades after Jesus. In both cases they bear human witness to events in the past.(8)

There are no scientific errors in the Quran." (9)

In conclusion then, the Pentateuch (Torah), as we know it today, is not exactly the same as it was revealed to Moses. The later books of Old Testament have also undergone many revisions and modifications for many words and phrases found in the older versions have been changed in subsequent revisions. It may be coincidental that many of the changed words, or sections are those which the Muslims have used in support of their view point. In spite of the inconsistencies among the various versions, the Old Testament still foretells the promulgation of a new law from God to guide future generations.

The absolute accuracy of the Bible can be best described by quoting from the preface of the Revised Standard Version, which describes it as the most probable reconstruction of events based on the best judgment of competent scholars.(10)

The Qur'an, on the other hand, stands alone in its absolute authenticity. Its accuracy is beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt. This fact has been corroborated by many independent researchers and can also be verified today through comparison with one of the first written copies.

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Reproduced and Edited from The Review of Religions, February 1994

Women in the Qur'an

Maha Dabbous

Islam confers on women all the political and social rights that man enjoys. A woman is entitled to all the privileges bestowed upon man. Beside worldly matters, women are also equal to men in the spiritual sense. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast in their faith and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him - Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward" (33:36).

This verse makes it clear that Muslim women stand on the same level with Muslim men and that they can attain to all those spiritual heights to which men can attain. At several places in the Qur'an, believing men and believing women are addressed in the same language and are made equally subject to the same commandments and entitled to the same rights and privileges. Only their duties are different because their spheres of activity are different.

When the Qur'an speaks about the souls of human beings, it does not differentiate between man and woman.

"O ye people ! fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear ALLAH, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of kinship. Verily Allah watches over you" (4:2).

The words *'single soul'* in this verse signifies man and woman taken together. They are spoken of as one because they are two persons jointly performing one function. This verse affirms that women and men belong to the same kind and species and that they have the same propensities.

The chains of the physical body are broken in the spiritual sphere, and man and woman are regarded as one. The equality of the status of the souls of man and woman is further emphasized when Allah describes how man and woman complement one another.

"So their Lord answered their prayers saying, I will not allow the work of any worker from among you, whether male or female, to be lost. You are from one another. Those therefore, who have emigrated, and have been driven out from their homes, and have been persecuted in My cause, and have fought and been killed, I will surely remove from them their evils and will cause them to enter gardens through which streams flow - a reward from Allah, and with Allah is the best reward" (3:196).

The Qur'an does not stop at this level; it continues to explain these facts by different means and from different angles. The Qur'an mentions the vision of Hazrat Moses (peace be upon him), and as an explanation of one of the inci-

dents in his vision we read:

"And as for the youth, his parents were believers, and we feared lest he should cause them trouble through rebellion and disbelief."

Islam confers on women all the political and social rights that man enjoys. A woman is entitled to all the privileges bestowed upon man. Beside worldly matters, women are also equal to men in the spiritual sense.

Here the expression *'his parents'* means the human body and soul because the parents, or the source from which springs all moral qualities, are the combination of the human body and soul, which is the human being himself.

Allah has created man as a free agent. He bestowed upon him great natural powers to enable him to perform the highest deeds of virtue. The human being can fulfill the great object of his life by making use of these powers which spring from a combination of his body and soul. But if these powers are not kept under proper control, they lead him to disbelief and transgression. These powers have been brought under proper control and their undue vehemence curbed by the commandments and ordinances that Allah has revealed to the world in His religion. Every human being is free to chose whether or not to follow the guidance of Allah. His freedom is of two components. The freedom of thought controlled by the mind and the freedom of feeling controlled by the heart.

The feeling of the heart is a consequence of the thought of the mind. The former is subordinate to the latter. This is why the two components of the inner self of the human being can be expressed figuratively by the words *'his parents'* where the mind is likened to the father who is the head of the family and the heart is likened to the mother who is its body.

Just as the peace and tranquility of the children in the family depend on the relation between the father and the mother and their combined efforts, in the same manner the peace and tranquility of a person depends on the harmony between his mind and heart as they form his spiritual parents.

The morals and behaviour of any person are a result of the combination of the actions of his mind and heart. If he does not profess the religion of Allah, then this combination is, in Divine estimation, a forbidden relation which produces illegitimate fruit. The person is cast away from Allah and he lives in a ruinous hell. But when he answers the call of Allah and embraces His religion and submits to Him, his mind and heart combine together to fulfill the purpose of his existence. Then this relation becomes legal and bears legitimate blessed fruit. The person is brought to a new spiritual life and attains to the peace and harmony of his inner self and he is rewarded by the love and nearness of Allah.

Allah has hinted to this similarity when referring to women:

"They are a garment to you, and you are garment to them" (2:188).

To understand this fully we need to understand the meaning of the word *'garment'* that is mentioned here. The Qu'ran itself explains the meaning of this word:

"O children of Adam, we have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your shame, and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of righteousness - that is the best. That is one of the signs of Allah, that they may remember" (7:27).

Here the Arabic word which was translated as raiment is *'libaas.'* A raiment is used to

cover our nakedness and also to serve as a decoration and embellishment and to make us look elegant. But this verse tells us more. It continues to tell us that the apparel of piety is in fact the really fine raiment for us. Ordinary dress covers our physical nakedness, while the apparel of piety covers our spiritual and moral nakedness. So the verse reminds us that when we consider it to be necessary to have good clothing to cover our physical nakedness and to use elegant dress to look graceful, we should all the more be anxious to cover our moral and spiritual nakedness. And the best raiment for us is the apparel of righteousness and piety.

The word raiment is further explained in another verse of the Qur'an:

"And Allah has made for you, of that which He has created, things affording shade, and He has made for you in the mountains, places of shelter and He has made for you garments which protect you from heat and coats of mail which protect you in your wars. Thus does He complete His favours on you that you may submit to Him" (16:82).

The verse show that garments are used for protection form heat and also for protection in battles. But again the verse tells us more. The verse ends with the phrase, *"Thus does He complete His favours on you, that you may submit to Him."* This draws our attention to the fact that the real purpose of this favour from Allah is to enable us to submit to Him. Hence we start to think about this verse in the spiritual sense. The heat from which our garments are protecting us can be understood as the ruinous hell within the inner self of a person who is disobedient to his Creator. He creates this hell himself out of his own choice and he has the ability to protect himself from it through following the guidance of Allah.

Also, the protection in wars can be taken as protection in spiritual battles. Islamic Jihad (striving for the cause of Allah) does not only involve killing and being killed, but also in striving hard to win the pleasure of Allah. This can best be done by serving the cause of truth with all one's might under the command and guidance of a Divinely appointed reformer. This is Jihad in the truest sense of the word. It can take the form of preaching and dissemination of the teachings of Islam by peaceful means or of defending it by the sword from being destroyed by its enemies. But the 'Great Jihad' as termed by the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the Jihad against one's baser self. i.e., against one's evil desires and propensities or against Satan.

So when we protect ourselves against our enemies in this spiritual battle, we can attain to victory in the form of true submission to Allah.

If we now combine the meaning of this verse with the meaning in the previously mentioned verse, we understand that Allah has bestowed upon us the ability to be righteous and pious so that we can protect ourselves from all evil which prevents our souls from surrendering to Allah.

We can also see that the word garment is used to signify the raiment of piety which us the means of the protection of the soul against all evil and hence, it is the means of attaining to true submission to Allah.

With this understanding of the word garment, we can now return to the original quotation:

"They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them" (2:188).

In the light of the above, we can now see that this expression can be applied to the two components of the human inner self. Exactly as the husband and wife complement one another and protect one another against the enemies who threaten the peace of their family, the two components of the inner self of the human being complement one another and protect one

another from all evil in their 'Great Jihad.' Righteousness will prevent a person from thinking wickedly and hence it will protect his heart from inclining towards evil, and at the same time righteousness will prevent him from evil desires which can poison his mind with evil.

Thus, righteousness protects a person from the ruinous hell which can be created by him through his disobedience to his Creator.

The two components of his inner self protect each other and adorn one another with the raiment of piety and this will lead him to complete submission to Allah.

After attaining to true submission to Allah and after following His guidance, a person naturally awaits some results and gains. This is again similar to the case of a husband and wife who, after establishing their marriage, desire to have children. In this connection Allah says:

"Your wives are a tilth for you, so approach your tilth when and how you like, and send ahead some good for yourselves and fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him, and bear good tidings to those who obey" (2:224).

The word *'tilth'* means a piece of land ploughed for sowing or actually sown with some crop or even under crop. It also means crop or produce of a land. It is also used to signify gain, acquisition or earning and also reward and recompense. The wife is likened to a tilth here because she is like a tilth in which the seed of progeny is sown to bear crop in the form of children.

A wise husbandman selects the best soil, prepares the best tilth, secures the best seed and chooses the best time and manner of sowing it. Similarly, a man should select a wife who is best suited as a tilth, i.e., pious and well qualified and of loving nature for the benefit of his children. He should love her and treat her well and look after her so that her life will be happy and contented and she may become best disposed to bring up the children well. Lastly, he should keep himself in a state of good physical and moral health so that his seed for his tilth may also be healthy in every respect. Then he will ensure that he will reap a good harvest in the form of pious and righteous children.

Considering this verse in the spiritual sense, we see that it is giving advice for attaining to true and complete submission to Allah. It tells a person to be careful about his ideas and opinions because whatever good or evil he conceals in his mind will serve like a seed for his inclinations and actions and it will bear good or evil fruit for himself. So the words *'send ahead some good for yourselves'* means plant a seed in your tilth for the good of your own selves. The means of sending this good is found in the words *'fear Allah,'* which shows that if a person wants to reap a good harvest for his actions, he should prevent evil from its very roots through being righteous.

The phrase *'and know that you shall meet Him'* can be taken as a continuation for the words *'fear Allah,'* which means that you should fear Allah because one day you shall meet Him on the Day of Judgment.

The phrase can also be taken as glad tidings, for those who will be righteous will have the honour of meeting Allah in this life, which is the aim of every true and sincere servant of Allah. This is followed by the words *'and bear glad tidings to those who obey,'* which means that this glad tiding is for the true believers. So this means that those who believe sincerely and follow this injunction and become righteous will secure for themselves the best results and gains. They will reap good fruit and enjoy the love and nearness of Allah in a true relationship with Him. They will be brought to a new life like a newborn child, and they will enjoy a life of peace, tranquility, and inner paradise.

When a person gains good

fruit out of following the guidance of Allah, he becomes encouraged and he tries to strive more in this path so that he can achieve more results and increase the good he gained out of it. His inner self reaches the phase of parenthood. His will and behaviour combine together to look after his faith and protect it exactly like the parents who combine their efforts to look after their children and protect them. His will submits completely to his Creator and he becomes devoted to Allah's religion and protects and nourishes it like the mother who nourishes her young children with love and care.

The Qur'an has given us a practical example of this advanced stage of human spiritual ascent in the person of Mary, the mother of Jesus (peace be upon him):

"And remember when the angels said: O Mary, Allah has chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above the women of all peoples" (3:43).

Mary is the example of a righteous believer and a sincere follower of the guidance of Allah. Again we read about Mary:

"Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said 'O Mary thou hast done a strange thing. O sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man nor was thy mother an unchaste woman'. Then she pointed to him. They said, 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' He said, 'I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the book and made me a Prophet; And He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be and has enjoined upon me Prayer and almsgiving so long as I live. And He has made me dutiful towards my mother and He has not made me haughty and unblessed" (19:28-33).

These verses tell us the story of Mary when she went to her people carrying Jesus (peace be upon him). The word for carrying him means that Mary believed in Jesus (peace be upon him) and helped him in his mission. When her people told her that she has done a strange thing, she silently pointed to Jesus (peace be upon him) who started introducing his religion to them.

In the spiritual sense, Mary signifies a true believer and a sincere follower of a prophet of Allah, who is acting upon the guidance furnished by this prophet and who is preaching her religion to others.

The words *'carrying him'* means that she has embraced his religion and reflected it in her person. When she declared this to her people and preached her religion to them, they rejected it because it was strange and unknown to them. So she silently started introducing her faith.

She pointed to the truth by her behaviour and conduct, by her complete submission to Allah and her true devotion to His service. She became a manifestation of the Unity of Allah.

The disbelievers could see the spiritual station to which she had attained. The fruits she achieved and gained proved the truth of her beliefs and the prophet she followed. She taught the people to follow the guidance of Allah through her actions which were in full compliance with the commandments and ordinances of her religion.

The verses explain to us the perfect way of preaching a religion. Mary signifies every sincere and true follower of a prophet of Allah whether this follower is a man or a woman. A female example is used because she is representing a person who reached this spiritual level through sincerely following the example of a prophet of Allah and through being a reflection of the prophet. Mary is also introduced as a mother to indicate that she represents the true believer who has already attained to true submission to Allah and who has already gained his fruit. He was granted a new spiritual life and has established a strong relationship with Allah. He has now reached the stage of looking after his faith and protecting it and nourishing it.

So he has spiritually reached the stage of motherhood of his religion.
This fact has been explained in the Qur'an:

"Allah sets forth for those who disbelieve the example of the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two righteous servants of Ours, but they acted unfaithfully towards them. So they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said to them, 'Enter the Fire, ye twain, along with those who enter.' And Allah sets forth for those who believe the example of the wife of Pharaoh when she said, 'My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the Garden, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the wrongdoing people; And the example of Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity - so We breathed into him of Our Spirit - and she fulfilled in her person the words of her Lord contained in His books and was one of the obedient" (66:11-13)

In these verses, we can see three examples of three different states of the inner self of a human being. The wives of Noah (peace be upon him) and Lot (peace be upon him) represent the disbelievers who reject the truth and do not benefit from the companionship of a righteous man or a prophet of Allah. Their inner self is in a state which incites the soul to evil. The wife of Pharoah stands for those believers who, though passionately desiring and praying to get rid of sin, yet cannot fully dissociate themselves from evil influences, represented by Pharoah, and having arrived at the stage of the self-accusing soul, sometimes fail and falter. Mary represents those righteous servants of Allah, who have closed all avenues of sin and have made peace with Allah and, as a result, are blessed with Divine inspiration. They have reached the stage of the soul at rest.

Mary here represents those who attained to the true submission to Allah. Her example can be followed by both men and women. The human race was created for one purpose: the worship of Allah. Every person whether a man or a woman is responsible to fulfill the purpose of his existence. Starting with himself, he should combine the efforts of his inner self together to attain to true submission to Allah. When he reaches the state of peace and tranquility of his own self, he can bring this paradise to his own home and family. This can be achieved by the combined efforts of the members of the family, who should all, individually and together as one unit, submit truly to Allah. Once this is achieved, the sphere of their effort can be increased to include other members of the society who should in the same manner combine their efforts together to bring more people to the true submission to Allah. Hence, the whole world can be brought to true submission to Allah and peace and tranquility can spread in the earth thus bringing paradise to earth.

This is the essence of Khilafat which springs from the inner depths of the human self. Khilafat combines together the efforts of the true servants of Allah under one leadership to bring the whole world to the true submission of Allah.

We who live in this age are very fortunate. We have witnessed the rebirth of Islam, the true religion of Allah, which was brought to the world by the best Prophet of mankind (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Promised Messiah (may Allah be pleased with him) revived this religion by following in the steps of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he planted the seed of Khilafat which is growing into a blessed tree by the efforts of his sincere followers under the leadership of his true successors. This tree needs the combined efforts of *both* men and women to keep it growing. May Allah enable us all to nourish this tree and to be of the fortunate ones who will bring the whole world to the true submission to Allah and spread His unity throughout the universe. Amen.

Reproduced and Edited from The Review of Religions February 1992.

Reflections on the Holy Qur'an and Science

Shahnawaz Rasheed

The human body is a marvel of science. It is able to exist in a variety of circumstances and adapt to its environment appropriately. This is done through the balance of numerous mechanisms within the body that help to maintain a healthy equilibrium. Here, the author looks at this amazing balancing act in the light of Quranic revelations, and shows how the body itself is a proof of the existence of God.

There are many instances in the Holy Qur'an where Allah gives man insight into the Wisdom required for the creation of a Universe with its variety and diversity; a universe in which it is possible for life to exist. One can see many aspects that need consideration when creating such a majestic and glorious Universe such as the one in which we live. In the course of the history of man, certain clues have been left which lead the curious on to find a meaning to life.

In the Holy Qur'an which is believed by Muslims to be the revealed Word of God, it is written:

"Say, `Who provides sustenance for you from the heaven or the earth ? Or who is it that has power over the ears and the eyes ? And who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living ? And who regulates all affairs ? They will say, `Allah.' Then say, `Will you not seek His protection ?'" (10:32).

This verse encourages those in search of truth to turn to Allah for an explanation of the nature of the Universe and the nature of the creations of Allah.

The subject that I wish to discuss here is balance, a subject which is fundamental to our functioning as human beings. It is also an intrinsic mechanism by which almost all things exist in the Universe. Balance, or equilibrium, is a constant feature of almost all systems one decides to look at. The concept of balance is covered in detail within scientific circles as well as receiving extensive coverage from mathematical, philosophical, financial, ethical, logical, religious and spiritual points of view. One can look at balance from many angles: the process of coming to a conclusion on disputing an idea can be considered as balancing the different aspects; the decision to perform an action comes at the end of balancing the pros and cons; the difference between exports and imports make up the balance of trade when assessing the economic status of a country; the decision by a judge or jury to convict a person charged with a crime comes after balancing the evidence for and against (hence the scales are the symbol of justice).

Within the natural sciences, the concept of balance is called homeostasis. It has been described as the return to a set point after a system has been disturbed. I would like to present the concept as described by the Holy Qur'an, then draw on a few examples as discovered through advances in the tide of scientific research, with particular reference to the human body.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an that:

"And the heavens He has raised high and set up the balance so that you may not exceed the measure. So weigh all things with justice and fall not short of the measure" (55:8-10).

The Arabic word *'Meezan'* can be translated as balance, measure, equity, the mean, the middle path, and incorporates the concepts of judgment, equilibrium and reasoned argument. It is derived from the word *'Wazn'* which literally means weight, and another derivative from the same root is *'Mauzoon,'* which means something made perfectly balanced or proportioned.

The Qur'anic verses concur with the findings of science that the universe is dependent on a series of laws that rely upon balance and equilibrium.

Another important Arabic word that must be mentioned in this context is *'Adl'* which means (absolute) justice. It is used by Allah when addressing mankind in the Holy Qur'an:

"O man! What has made thee arrogant in relation to thy noble Lord? The One who created you and perfectly proportioned you and fashioned you with justice. This He did at every stage and to every form in which He compounded and fashioned you" (82:7-9).

This verse invites mankind, who may have failed to notice the complete order throughout the Universe to at least take a look at himself to see the symmetry and proportionality of the human body.

The word *'Adl'* encompasses the concepts of *'Mauzoon'* and *'Meezan,'* but also incorporates the issue of consciousness, which is an inexhaustible subject in itself.

Generalized Control System

The fundamental components of a control system of any type can be clearly seen by looking at the design of a simple thermostat which controls the temperature of a house. The thermostat has three essential components:

- *thermometer to measure temperature*
- *source of heat*
- *switch to regulate heat*

If the thermostat is set at a particular point, for example 25 degrees C, and the temperature rises above this, it is detected by the thermometer and a signal is sent by the regulator to turn the heat off. If the house temperature is detected below 25 degrees C, a signal is sent to turn up the heating until it reaches the desired temperature.

This simple example can be used to explain any control system that attempts to keep a value constant.

Introduction to Human Physiology

The matter that I wish to draw your attention to is the balancing systems which exist within the human body. As I am sure you appreciate, the science of the human body is a complicated subject with all its intricately interwoven systems. The outstanding feature that I want to get across is that balance is a key part of virtually all the systems.

In general, the compartments of the body have various parameters or values that are maintained at an optimum level to perpetuate and preserve life. If these parameters fall outside `normal' levels, the body has various intrinsic mechanisms to normalize those values. If unable to keep

the value within the desired range, the body inclines to a state of disease. If there is a further change away from the normal range, after all attempts are made to normalize and compensate for the abnormal values, the body may suffer loss of an organ, or, in extreme circumstances death.

The necessity to maintain stability of structure and function is paramount to every animal. This stability or equilibrium is threatened by internal and external assaults. Externally, assaults may come in the form of extremes of temperature and internally, assaults may take the form of the production of harmful waste products. Cells require a constant environment in which to operate at an optimum level. This environment includes temperature, chemical composition (e.g., Sodium, Potassium, Calcium), acidity etc.

Energy and Waste

In order to perform internal cellular processes, the cells require a constant energy supply. This is mainly provided by the breakdown of fats and carbohydrates. Using oxygen, the fuel is `burned' (oxidized) via a number of biochemical pathways to provide energy, yielding a number of waste products.

The blood circulatory system provides a link between the various organs in the body. The left side of the heart (left ventricle) pumps blood rich in oxygen to the organs through the arteries. The cells then use the oxygen to burn the fuels which are also circulating in the blood to produce energy. One of the most abundant waste products, carbon dioxide, has to be removed to avoid poisoning the cells, so it is returned to the right side of the heart (right ventricle). From here, the carbon dioxide rich blood is pumped to the lungs where it is breathed out and replaced with fresh oxygen. If the requirement for oxygen increases, so the breathing and heart rates increase. As requirements decrease, so breathing and heart rates decrease.

Equilibrium of Glucose Metabolism

The most common source of energy in animals including humans is the carbohydrate glucose. Using oxygen via a specific biochemical pathway known as `glycolysis', glucose is oxidized to provide energy yielding the products carbon dioxide and water. Glucose levels are replenished by means of the diet. Food is absorbed from the gut into the bloodstream, and can be stored in the liver, muscle, and fat. Glucose is stored mainly in the liver and muscles as glycogen. Since glucose is the preferred source of energy in the body, the fate of absorbed glucose depends on the energy requirements of the body. If the cells need to produce energy, they need a steady supply of glucose, so there are mechanisms within the body to mobilize its stores of glucose. The detection of an inadequate blood glucose level is by glucose receptors predominantly within the brain and pancreas. The brain processes the information and sets into motion the feeling of hunger within the person such that they may acquire and ingest food. The pancreas releases a protein hormone called glucogen which causes the stores of glycogen to be converted to free glucose in the blood. These two mechanisms, among others, provide the cells with their required glucose.

If, conversely, the blood glucose is greater than the need of the cells, then following detection by receptors, the pancreas releases another hormone called insulin. This favours glucose being stored as glucogen rather than being free in the blood. Also, the brain gives the feeling of being satiated, so no more food is ingested.

Therefore, it can be seen that the blood glucose level is regulated within a fairly tight

range to preserve its balance. If this is disturbed, the effects can be dangerous and problematic for the individual. For example, if not enough glucose reaches the brain, the cells cannot survive. In the short term, the person feels dizzy and has a feeling of hunger. If this lack of glucose continues for a longer period of time, alternative sources of energy are utilized. If inadequate, it leads to brain cell death and eventually to bodily death.

Alternatively, if there is too much glucose in the blood, this leads to other problems. The medical condition defined by a raised blood glucose is Diabetes Mellitus, and can be related to heart and blood vessel disease, loss of vision, loss of sensation, gangrene and kidney failure, if uncontrolled. It has been shown to be a problem with insulin either not being released or not having its desired effect.

Temperature Control and Balance

In the human (animal) body, there is a system to regulate and control temperature. In mammals (warm-blooded animals) the optimum temperature is approximately 37.5 degrees C (98.6 degrees F). This means that although the external temperature may vary greatly from place to place and time to time, the body has mechanisms to compensate for the variations.

On Earth, the temperature has been measured below -60 degrees C in Arctic conditions and above 60 degrees C in desert conditions. The greatest variation in internal body temperature consistent with cellular life is around +- 4 degrees C, so if body temperature were to rise and fall with external temperature, the cells would soon die.

In the brain, specifically the hypothalamus, there is a temperature monitoring device somewhat like the thermostat that I described earlier. This receives input from temperature receptors (thermometers) scattered throughout the body, both on the skin and in internal organs.

If the hypothalamic `temperature centre' detects that the body temperature is too high i.e. greater than 37.5 degrees C, then cooling processes are activated. These include diverting blood nearer to the body surface which allows the excess of heat to be lost to the environment. In addition, sweat glands are activated which produce perspiration which evaporates and cools the skin. Also, the body's metabolic rate (rate at which food is being burned) is decreased so less heat is produced.

If the `temperature centre' detects that the body temperature is too low, the systems of heat conservation are set into motion. These include diverting blood away from the surface to prevent further heat loss, effecting the burning of food stores, the mechanisms of shivering and teeth-chattering to generate heat by movement and the concurrent production of heat-generating hormones. There are many problems associated with either extreme of body temperature. If it is too high, it leads to a state of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke etc. Conversely, if body temperature is too low, the resulting hypothermia is associated with cell death and heart problems. It is obvious that the issue of water control balance is also closely linked to temperature control so this is a good example of the integration of balancing systems within the human body.

Weight Balance

Most individuals maintain body weight within a very small range of +- 1-2% over most of their lives. Body weight and energy balance are regulated by genetic and environmental influences. These control food intake, appetite, diet selection, absorption in the gut, energy expenditure and fat storage/breakdown. Integration of various signal-

ing processes results in constant weight in normal circumstances. Any disturbance of this finely tuned energy balance results in a net increase or decrease of weight producing obesity (weight gain) or cachexia (weight loss).

The geographical description of obesity and cachexia highlights the disgraceful imbalance in food distribution. In the so-called developed world, obesity is the most common disease. In 1990, more than 30% of the United States population were obese. In the United Kingdom, the prevalence of obesity has risen from 12.7% to 13.2% in men and from 15.0% to 16.0% in women between 1991 and 1994, and is continuing to rise. This is starkly contrasted to the developing world where the most common disease is malnutrition and starvation.

Conclusion

As well as the balancing mechanisms that I have briefly described, there are countless other systems of balance control within the human body. These include mechanisms for oxygen, carbon dioxide, sodium, potassium, calcium, light, sound, pain, movement, posture and blood pressure. But by no means is this list exhaustive. I have just tried to give an indication of how important the concept of balance is for animal life, and in particular for human life.

It is not surprising that this concept has been disclosed by God, Who created it, in His Revealed Word within the Holy Qur'an. The suggestion in the Qur'an is that the Universe is subject to a number of laws that interact harmoniously and with perfect balance. It is stated that if the equilibrium were not maintained, the Universe would tumble into absolute destruction. This all points to a Unity of purpose, the raison d'etre being the glorification of the One Creator. It says in the Qur'an:

"If there had been in them (the heavens and the earth) other gods beside Allah, then surely both would have gone to ruin" (21:23).

This statement is supported by the apparent consensus of laws in operation within the Universe. These lead any open-minded and free thinking individual to have to conclude that there is One Creator and Sustainer of the Universe in which we live.

The balance mechanisms that I have touched upon in terms of the physical world can also be considered in terms of morality and spirituality. These encompass the subjects of conscience, the existence of the soul and the ability to distinguish between good and evil. The explicit explanation of balance, absolute justice and equilibrium are abundant in the Holy Qur'an. In the opening chapter, Allah teaches mankind a prayer which, if discovered and utilized, would prove invaluable in the maintenance of a balanced life.

"Guide us on the right path" (1:6).

The words *'Siratul Mustaqeem'* from the original Arabic can be translated as 'Right Path,' 'Straight Path' or 'Shortest Path.' This implies the path of fewest deviations, hence not living on either extreme, but maintaining a straight direction of purpose.

The insight and wisdom of the Holy Qur'an is truly astonishing. The knowledge that is present within its teaching is a vast and limitless source of information. If we were to follow the instructions, many physical, moral and spiritual diseases could certainly be avoided.

With reference to balance, if we were to avoid excesses within our lives, we could avoid the problems associated with the resulting imbalances. The balancing mechanisms of the body tolerate a certain amount of abuse and cushion the effects of indulgence to a certain extent. However, after continuous assaults on the various systems of the body, the protective mechanisms

give way and allow the various disease mechanisms to have their way.

Therefore, the evidence suggests that the best way of life is that of the well balanced and middle path. This is upheld by religious doctrines as well as scientific research. It appears that scientific discovery has only recently caught up with what was revealed in the Holy Qur'an 1400 years ago. Surely the most logical and reasonable line of thought would lead one to follow and learn from the Revelation of Allah Who created us and set into being all of the natural laws to which we are subject.

References

The Holy Qur'an

1. Chapter 10, Verse 32
2. Chapter 55, Verse 8-10
3. Chapter 82, Verse 7-9
4. Chapter 21, Verse 23
5. Chapter 1, Verse 6-7

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Reproduced and Edited from The Review of Religions, September 1996.

Perfect Knowledge

Dear ones, no one can fight God's designs. Be sure that the source of perfect knowledge is divine revelation which is bestowed on the holy prophets of God. Therefore, God, Who is the ocean of grace, did not design that divine revelation should be sealed up for the future and the world should thus be destroyed. The doors of His revelation and converse are always open. If you seek them along their proper ways, you will find them easily. The water of life has come down from heaven and has stopped at its proper place. What must you do, so that you might drink of it? You should, by some means or the other, arrive at that fountain and should put your mouth to it so that you might be filled with the water of life. The entire good fortune of a person consists in this that he should run in the direction in which he perceives that light, and should adopt the way in which he discovers a sign of the Friend Who has been lost.

You have observed that light always descends from heaven and falls upon the earth. In the same way the true light of guidance also descends from heaven. Man's own devices and his own conjectures can not bestow true understanding upon him. Can you behold God without His manifestation? Can you see in the dark without the help of heavenly light? If you can, you may perhaps see in this case also. But our eyes, though in perfect condition, depend on heavenly light; and our ears, though they can hear perfectly, depend upon the air which circulates under divine direction. That God is not true who is silent and leaves every thing to our conjectures. The Perfect and Living God is He Who manifests Himself on His own. At this time also He has designed to disclose His own Being. The windows of heaven are about to open and the day is about to dawn. Blessed are those who should rise up and seek the True God, the One Who is not overtaken by any calamity, the brilliance of Whose Glory is never dimmed.

Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam,pp. 128-29

Faith Enhancing

UK Jalsa 2003 Expereince

By

Jalaluddin Abdul Latif, North Carolina

After returning home from the UK Jalsa this year, my friends asked me about my experience, whether I had the good fortune of meeting Huzoor and what were my impressions. My initial response was always the same- my head was spinning from the time I found out I was able to go until the time I returned home. Then I would begin to relate, what I see as amazing events and experiences that unfolded in between.

I felt very sad when I was unable to go to UK for the Janaza prayers of our beloved Khalifatul Masih[ra] IV and the election and baiat of Khalifatul Masih[aba] V. Alhamdullilah, two of my sons were able to attend the Janaza. Living off a fixed income, international traveling is quite impossible. Now at the time of the UK Jalsa, I was in the same predicament. At the USA Jalsa, when Anwar Kahlon Sahib asked me whether I would be going to the UK Jalsa, I had to reply in the negative once again. About a week before the UK Jalsa, when I was preparing to take my dear friend -Akbar Ahmadi (who introduced me to Ahmadiyyat) to New York, I received a phone call from big brother Dr. Imtiaz Chaudhry. He asked me if I planned to attend the UK Jalsa. I replied that I could not afford it this year, maybe I could make it next time. He asked me whether I wanted to go. I asked him if he was joking. He told me that while saying his prayers last night, he thought that since he was going, he should take his younger brother, Jalal with him. I could hardly believe what I was hearing. He said he would call me after finding a good deal on the airline reservations. He called me back and informed me that the tickets were for Thursday morning departure from Newark, and return for Monday. I told him that I was already planning to bring Akbar back to NY on Monday. I would spend a couple of days with my daughter Aliya in Brooklyn and I would see him on Wednesday evening. When we offered prayers that night, all I could think of was the Rahmaniyyat of Almighty Allah. Only by the Grace of Al Rahman was this possible.

When I was packing to leave, my wife insisted that I take my suit and tie. I told her that I would be staying in Islamabad and returning the next day after Jalsa, thus I did not need a suit. She insisted that I take it anyway. So I put it on a hanger and hung it in the car. My situation was such that Akbar had to buy some gas for our trip. When I dropped him at his home in Brooklyn, he stuck $60.00 in my shirt pocket and refused to take it back. That was all the money I had available to spend while in Jalsa.

I spent Wednesday night at my brother's home and Thursday morning his son drove us to the airport. I didn't want to fold my suit to keep it in my bag, so I wore it. After checking in at the British Airways counter, while I was sitting at the gate and Dr Imtiaz was reading some advertisements on the wall, a British Airways agent approached me and asked me to accompany her. My first thought was that in the aftermath of 9/11, a black guy with an Arabic name is a possible terrorist suspect, thus I would be stripped and searched. When I inquired from the lady where she was going to take me, she replied that a man as distinguished as me should not be sitting here and offered me the executive lounge. When I told her that I was accompanied by a friend, she said that he could come with me. The lady introduced herself as Stephanie and said that she would call us when it was time for us to board. When boarding started, our names were called out that we should meet the boarding agent. As we left the executive lounge, Stephanie informed us that she had upgraded our tickets to 'World Traveler Plus' class. I could not believe all this was happening. When the flight took off, I thought that here I was sitting, almost 40,000 ft in the air in one of the premier airlines, in special seating having partaken of the executive hospitality, on my way to a historical 1st Jalsa of the 5th successor to the Promised Messiah (as), with only 40 dollars in my pocket. If this isn't AL HUM DU LLILAH, I don't know what is!

It was evening when we landed at Heathrow airport. As we walked down the corridor, Imtiaz spotted an Ahmadi family waiting for the Jalsa volunteers to pick them up. We all sat together till two young men came up and informed us that the pickup van will be arriving shortly. They had been on duty since 5am and were not relieved until about 11pm, and they had been doing this since Monday. I later saw the same boys on duty at Islamabad and they were still smiling. I don't remember their names but that was the spirit I saw in the young people who looked after the guests of the Promised Messiah. It is my prayer, that may Allah give them all a great reward.

We reached Islamabad after 10pm, and without much trouble we secured a place to stay in a marqee that housed guests from USA, Canada and West Africa. Imtiaz and I found room with my brothers from Ghana whom I always saw on visits to the headquarters in Silver Spring, MD. It reminded me of the Hajj at Mina. I had an idea what it would be like when Ahmadis could freely make Hajj, and true brotherhood and spirituality would be witnessed during those blessed days.

From the moment we arrived, Imtiaz kept urging me to sign up for a Mulaqat with Hazoor. I had attended UK Jalsa on two previous occasions and knew how hard it is to get one during Jalsa. On each previous occasion, we had to stay a week after Jalsa for the Mulaqat. Now that we were leaving the next day after Jalsa, there wasn't much chance. On Saturday morning, Imtiaz insisted that I should go to the private secretary's office at 9am and request for a meeting with Huzoor. I reached the office at 9:10 and asked the private secretary - Mr Munir Javed if it was possible for me to get a Mulaqat before I left on Monday. He looked at the book and wrote me down for Monday evening. I told him that I would be leaving Mon-

day morning. He looked at the book again and asked whether I could bring along 4 or 5 African-American brothers and be back at the office by 11am, as Huzoor would like to meet them. I could hardly believe my good fortune that in less than 2 hours from the time I give my name I would be able to privately meet the 5th Khalifa during the Jalsa. As soon as I left the private secretary's office, I ran into the National Tabligh secretary of USA - Ali Murtaza. I told Ali about my good fortune and we headed off to the morning session in the main marqee. After being seated for a few minutes, missionary of Baltimore, MD- Bilal Abdus Salam walked in and sat down with us. A few minuets later, three brothers from the Philadelphia, PA Jamaat came in. I told Bilal what was happening at 11am and he informed the brothers from Philadelphia.

Ten minutes before 11am, we all headed for the mosque and got in line for our meeting with Huzoor. Luckily, I had my camera with me and I requested Mr Munir Javed Sahib, if he could take a picture of us with Huzoor. When we got up for the Mulaqat, I became very nervous as I usually did whenever I met the Khalifa face to face. I remember the last time I met Khalifa-tul Masih IV along with my wife, I was so nervous when I sat down in front of him, that he looked at me and smiled. He must have seen how nervous I was, so he started talking to my wife. When we entered the room for this meeting, Huzoor stood up to greet us. I was at the head of our group and after I said my salaams, I took Huzoor's extended hand, shook it, then kissed it and moved to the side for the next person, missionary Bilal. I was still in awe at what I had just done, when I noticed that Bilal had embraced Hazur and I could hear him sobbing. I realized I had just missed a chance to embrace the Khalifa. Forgetting all types of protocol, I blurted out that I too wanted a hug with Huzoor. Huzoor looked at me and smiled, and I think I heard the brothers laughing. The Khalifa reached out and we embraced, and I felt like being on top of the world. I was embarrassed for blurting out but I just could not afford to miss this opportunity. Huzoor asked us all about our respective jamaats and what offices we held, and we talked for a few minutes. I was so impressed with how handsome and warm Huzoor appeared in person. Watching him on MTA at Jumma, he seems quite serious and does not smile much. Sitting in front of us, he seemed so warm, as if he was about to smile. It seemed that was his natural look. He was what I would refer to as 'disarming.' When I first saw him standing at the door of Fazl Mosque after being elected as Khalifa, I felt an immediate connection to this man whom I have never seen or heard of before. While sitting in front of him, looking into those penetrating eyes, I felt completely disarmed as if this person had rendered me helpless. I have heard many times since I became an Ahmadi, that it is Allah who appoints the Khulafa. And I personally know that this is a fact. It is only Allah- the Rahman, who could move the hearts of the people to elect the right person. Further, it is only Allah who could put the love that I felt for this Khalifa in my heart, whereas I had never even heard his name before the night he was elected.

The private secretary took our pictures. He suggested that we divide in two groups. Bilal and I stood on each side of Huzoor, who held my hand tightly and I will never forget that.

After the meeting, we came across Kaleemuddin who had a microphone in his hand and was conducting interviews for MTA. Kaleem asked if we would be willing to give an interview. Bilal inquired whether it was going to be broadcasted live. Kaleem replied that it will be recorded. As he started the interview, I was still in a state of daze after meeting Huzoor and do not remember the questions that were asked nor my answers.

Since then I have met a number of people who have seen the interview, and some have even said it was good, but I am sure that they are being kind. When we finished the interview and walked in to the main marquee, the first person I met was Missionary Mubashar Ahmad who exclaimed that he just saw me on MTA giving an interview. I just could not believe that. Kaleem had said that they were recording it and would go over it before broadcasting it. I guess he said that to try to relax us. But it did not work in my case.

At the Jalsa, I had the opportunity to eat in the VIP tent with Missionary Bilal and Ali, and that is where I met my dear friend Anwar Kahlon Sahib who upon seeing me said that he though that I would not be coming to the Jalsa. I related to him how my circumstances changed and how it became possible. Bilal had never met him, so I introduced him as the person to whom Sir Zafarullah Khan (May Allah give him the best reward and bless his soul) wrote the book - 'A letter to a dear One'.

Sunday came and what seemed like too soon, it was time to start securing a ride back to Heathrow airport. We arranged for a taxi for 5:30 AM Monday morning. By 6:00 AM our taxi had still not arrived. While we were waiting, the UK Amir, Mr. Rafique Hayat Sahib passed by us and asked Imtiaz what we were doing there. When he heard that we needed transportation to Heathrow, he immediately asked one of his companions to make arrangements for us. A moment later a van from the parking lot pulled over near us. The brother got out, said his salaams to all and started loading the luggage. Amir Sahib asked me what I thought about the Jalsa. I told him that I had nothing but praise for the UK Jamaat and their expertise in carrying out what I thought was an excellent Jalsa, and may Allah give them all the best reward. As we traversed along the highway, I said to myself that this whole Jalsa was one of the most amazing experiences I had ever had. I could hardly believe that everything kept falling in to place like it did. I was humbled by these amazing happenings.

We got to Heathrow with enough spare time and everybody went to their terminals. Walking up to check- in counter, Imtiaz remarked that would it not be wonderful to run into Stephanie again!

Jalaluddin Abdul-Latif, RT Jamaat, North Carolina

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Please fax or mail your order to Zaheer Ahmed Bajwa at the following address

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Washington D.C. 20008
Fax: 202 232 8181

DREAM TOWN VISION

This will be a small residential town, with potential for growth in activity, population and necessary infrastructure over time. It will be located in a temperate climate, picturesque setting, and low cost/tax area. It should be accessible by highway and situated within 100 miles of a large city – a city with good schools, colleges, hospitals, airports, shopping centers, recreational, and entertainment activities.

This town will be developed in phases. Initially, it will have three residential sub-divisions with small (2-3 Bedrooms, 1½ Baths), medium (4 Bedrooms, 2½ Baths), and upscale custom homes, an apartment complex, a strip mall, a gas/lube station, and a mosque. It will be located within a 30-45 minute drive from a town with basic shopping area, emergency/ primary care center, etc.

This town will also have suitable sites designated for mobile homes, an elderly care center, and a cemetery. It will have provisions for a large community center complex (with a central mosque, a multi-purpose hall, sports center, guest house, etc.), and an office complex. It will also have a large open park to hold public events, like Jama'at Conventions *(Jalsa Salanas)*, Auxiliary Rallies *(Ijtemas)*, Education and Training *(Ta'leem-o-Tarbiy'yat)* Camps, and Camping/Cabin style living quarters with Public Restrooms.

The town master plan will be well designed with the necessary infra structure of roadways, water supply, sewerage system, and provisions for future growth. We will start with about a 1,000 acre parcel of land. The initial planning phase is expected to complete by 2005 and the first phase construction should be complete by 2010. *Insha-Allah.*

Dear Ahmadi Muslim Adult: *Assalamo Alaikum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatohu.*

Majlis Ansarullah, USA, is envisioning the development of an Ahmadiy'ya Muslim Community Town in the United States. To further develop this vision, we need your feedback relative to your current or potential future interest in such a town. Your feedback is critical to the realization of this vision. Please fill out this survey and return it to 24100 Tottenham Ct, Novi, MI 48374, by August 31, 2003. *Jazakallah.*

Name: _____ **Jama'at**: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

Age (check one): [ ] Over 65 [ ] 60-65 [ ] 55-60 [ ] 50-55 [ ] 45-50 [ ] 40-45

[ ] 35-40 [ ] Under 35

Which state would you prefer this town to be located in (check one)? [ ] DE / PA [ ] VA / WVA or South [ ] OH or West

When would you like to buy land in this town (check one)? [ ] 1-5 yrs [ ] 5-10 yrs [ ] 10-15 yrs [ ] 15-20 yrs [ ] Over 20 yrs

How much would you like to invest in land (check one)? [ ] $5-$10K [ ] $10-$15K [ ] $15-$25K [ ] $25-$50K [ ] Over $50K

When would you be able to build on your land (check one)? [ ] 1-5 yrs [ ] 5-10 yrs [ ] 10-15 yrs [ ] 15-20 yrs [ ] Over 20 yrs

How much would you like to invest in building (check one)? [ ] $50-$100K [ ] $100-$250K [ ] $250-$500K [ ] Over $500K

Would you like to join a group to buy land for this town and resell later to others (circle one)? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, how much would you able to invest in the next 2-3 years (check one)? [ ] $50-$100K [ ] $100-$250K [ ] Over $250K

If we can accommodate any of your preference(s) above, would you be willing to deposit a $1,000 advance (check one)? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Please describe your experience in the Real Estate/Architect/Construction industry, if any

_____

Comments/Suggestions (how can you help us in further developing this vision?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM JAMA'AT, USA
2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 4	Sunday	Review of Last year activities and Future Plans	Local*
Jan. 17-18	Sat-Sun	Tabligh Class 1 (Southeast)	Regional
Jan. 17-18	Sat-Sun	Ansarullah Leadership Conference	National
February:	The whole month is established as the special month for Tabligh.		
February 1	Sunday	**Eidul-Adhia*** **	
February 7	Saturday	1st National Aamla Meeting at Baitur Rahman	National
Feb. 22	Sunday	Musleh Mau'ood Day (Historical Feb. 20)	Local/Regional
March 21	Sunday	Masih-e-Mau'ood Day (Historical March 23)	Local/Regional
March 27	Saturday	2nd National Aamla Meeting at Baitur Rahman	National
April 3	Saturday	Ahmadiyya Conference for Entrepreneurs MKA	
April 3-4	Sat-Sun	Tabligh Class 2 (Northeast)	Regional
April 9-11	Fri-Sun	Tarbiyyati Train the Trainer Class at Queens (NY)	National
April 23-25	Fri-Sun	National Majlis-i-Shura at Baitur Rahman	
May 15	Saturday	Taleemul Quran Class 1 at Old Bridge, NJ	East Coast
May 16	Sunday	Taleemul Quran Class 2 at Queens, NY	East Coast
May 22	Saturday	3rd National Aamla Meeting at Baitur Rahman	National
May 30	Sunday	Khilafat Day (Historical May 27)	Local/Regional
June 5-6	Sat-Sun	Tabligh Class 3 (Head Quarters)	Regional
June 25-27	Fri-Sun	**Jalsa Salana, USA**	National
July 2-4	Fri-Sun	**Jalsa Salana Canada** at Toronto (expected)	Canada
July 9-23	Fri-Fri	Tabligh and Tarbiyyati Class at Baitur Rahman	National

July 30/ Aug. 1	Fri-Sun	Jalsa Salana UK (expected)	UK
July 30/ Aug 5	Fri-Thurs	Special Regional Atfaal Camp at Baitur Rahman	MD
Aug 6-8	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Khuddamul Ahmadiyya	National
Aug 13-15	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Lajna & Nasirat at Baitur Rahman, MD	East Coast
Aug 20-22	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Lajna & Nasirat at Baitul Jamaay, Chicago	Midwest
Aug. 28	Saturday	Taleemul Quran Class 3 at Bay Point, Pittsburgh, CA	N. West Coast
Aug. 29	Sunday	Taleemul Quran Class 4 at Chino, California	S. West Coast
Sept.3-5	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Lajna & Nasirat at Baitul Hameed, LA	West Coast
Sept. 3-5	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Lajna & Nasirat at Baitus Samee, Houston	South Region
Sept. 4	Saturday	4th National Aamla Meeting at Baitur Rahman	National
Sept 4-6	Sat-Mon	Local Jama'ats' Officials Conference at NHQ	National
Sept. 12	Sunday	Seeratun-Nabi Day**	Regional*
Sept. 26	Sunday	Taleemul Quran Class 5	Local
Oct. 1-3	Fri-Sun	Lajna National Majlis-e-Aamila & Local Presidents' Meeting	
Oct. 8-10	Fri-Sun	Ansarullah Ijtema & Shura at Baitur Rahman	National
Oct. 16	Saturday	**First Day of Ramadanul Mubarak** (Fasting)***	
Oct. 30-31	Sat-Sun	Tabligh Class 4 (Southwest)	Regional
Nov. 14	Sunday	**EIDUL FITR*** **	
Nov. 20	Saturday	5th National Aamla Meeting at Baitur Rahman	National
Nov. 28	Sunday	Religious Founders' Day	Regional
Dec. 11-12	Sat-Sun	Taleemul Quran Class 6 at Houston, TX	South
Dec. 24-26	Fri-Sun	Jalsa West Coast at Los Angeles	West-Coast

4 Tabligh Classes - Regional

(1)	Southeast	January 17-18
(2)	Northeast	April 3-4
(3)	NHQ	June 5-6
(4)	Southwest	October 30-31

Regional Tarbiyyati Classes

- Dates to be announced in consultation with host Jama'ats.
- Train the Trainer Class April 9-11

6 Taleemul Quran Classes - Regional

(1)	East Coast (New Jersey)	May 15
(2)	East Coast (New York)	May 16
(3)	N. West Coast (Pittsburg)	August 28
(4)	S. West Coast (Chino)	August 29
(5)	Local	Sept. 26
(6)	South (Houston)	December 11-12

4 Lajna Ijtemas - Regional

(1)	East Coast	August 13-15
(2)	Midwest	August 20-22
(3)	West Coast	September 3-5
(4)	South	September 3-5

* Dates for Local/Regional events can be changed for Local/Regional needs. As a routine, Local functions can be held on 1st Sunday of the month while Regional functions can be held on 2nd Sunday of the month. Reports should be sent to the Headquarters,

** Additional Seeratun Nabi Days should be arranged . In addition to Local/Regional level functions, small-scale functions for Seeratun Nabi should be arranged at Halqa level at Ahmadi homes.

*** The dates for events based on appearance of the moon, have been calculated on scientific basis with great care. If there are Local /Regional Ahmadi eyewitnesses of the moon at an earlier date, then the event should be celebrated according to the eye witness accounts.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, USA, College Scholarship

(Including Talent-based scholarship, need-based scholarship, educational loan)

A limited number of scholarships/loans are available for Ahmadi students of US Jama'ats to support college education. The goals of this scholarship are as follows:

1. Recognize educational talent amongst Ahmadi students.
2. Encourage and promote pursuit of education among Ahmadi youth, especially amongst whom pursuit of education may be perceived as prohibitively expensive.
3. Make a valid attempt to ensure that an Ahmadi is not kept from achieving his/her laudable educational and career goals due to financial hardship.
4. To encourage more challenging (and possibly more costly) educational endeavors amongst Ahmadi youth that they would normally not consider due to financial constraints.

Kindly send the completed application, after approval by the local President or Regional Missionary, along with the required documents to:
Secretary Scholarship Committee, Bait-ur-Rahman, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Springs, MD 20905.
Email: scholarship_committee@yahoo.com (all inquiries are also to be directed to this address).

Dates and Deadlines

Deadline for **receipt** of the application is May 31, 2004 (no exceptions please). Please allow adequate time for mail. It will be appreciated and is strongly recommended to send the application earlier.

The application will be acknowledged within two weeks of its receipt by email or regular mail. If the applicant has not received any acknowledgment kindly contact us by mail or email.

Kindly follow all instructions and consult the checklist to ensure that all required documents are included. Incomplete information may result in your application not being considered for the current year.

Candidates will be notified between July 15 and August 1 of the decision.

Scholarship amount and period.

Scholarships will be awarded for one year for a maximum amount of $5000 ($2500 per semester). This will be paid in two installments of $2500 for each semester. If the applicant is attending only one semester this year then the maximum amount of scholarship will be $2500. The maximum amount of scholarship will not exceed the expenses itemized in the application or $5000 whichever is lower.

Scholarship Review Process

Applications will be anonymously scored on merit, financial need and the personal statement. Talent based scholarships will be solely awarded on merit. 50% of the scholarship fund will be distributed as need-based scholarship, which is funded from *sadaqaat*. The remaining amount will be distributed as interest free educational loan (*qarz-e-hasana*), payable upon successful employment. Candidate must contact scholarship committee at the start of employment to set up a schedule for repayment. This is important since this amount is subsequently recycled in the form of scholarships or loans.

Scholarship award process

The amount for fall semester will be sent after August 1, and that for spring semester will be mailed after January 1. To receive the amount for the spring semester, following need to be received by Dec. 1:

1. Itemized statement of (with copies of receipts) as to where the previous semester's amount was spent.
2. Accumulative grade point average (GPA) for the fall semester or a letter from the course supervisor attesting to student's good standing.
3. Confirmation of acceptance in the spring semester.

If the scholarship is for a summer semester, one can only apply a year in advance and please communicate with us clearly that you are requesting the amount for summer semester.

Application # 2004

Bismillah-hir-Raman-nir-Raheem

APPLICATION FOR AHMADIYYA SCHOLARSHIP

Assalamo Alaikum.

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to be of service to you. Kindly complete each section. **Please Print clearly.** Carefully follow all instructions included with each section. Incomplete or illegible application will result in delay that could lead to rejection of your application. Kindly help us by providing complete information by May 31, 2004. You are encouraged to send the application early.

Applicants applying only for Talent based scholarships, need not answer the questions on income and dependents in Section C. However, by filling this section, their application will automatically be considered for need-based scholarships or loans also.

Please check here if you are applying for Talent based scholarships only ☐

Please check here if you only wish to be considered for educational loan ☐

(Checking this box in no way affects your chance of success in the approval process.)

Section A: Your details

1. Your name .....
2. Your membership code ..... 3.Your Social Security No. .....
4. Your Father's/Parent's name .....
5. Your Address: .....

   City..... State ..... Zip Code .....

6 Your email address ..... 7. Your Phone No. .....

8. Name and address of Educational Institution. .....

   City ..... State ..... Zip Code .....

9. Name of Course ..... 10. Duration of course .....

Section B: Your (candidate's) Attestation and Signature

I attest I am an Ahmadi Muslim. All information in this application is true to the best of my knowledge

Signature ..... Date .....

Section C: President or Regional Missionary's Approval

Please have this section completed by your local Jamaat President. If you do not live in a chapter, please have the Regional Missionary fill this section out.

1. Is the applicant an Ahmadi with a member Code YES..... NO ..... Code pending .....
2. Applicant is in good standing with Jamaat, i.e., not exiled YES ..... NO .....
3. Member has reasonable participation in Jamaat activities YES ..... NO .....
4. Applicant is reasonably needy YES ..... NO .....
5. Approved YES ..... NO .....
6. Comments .....

   .....

   President/Regional Missionary's Signature .....

   President/Regional Missionary's Name .....

   Name of Chapter/Region ..... Date .....

 Application # 2004

Section D: Financial Need

1. Amount of scholarship applied for (Max. $5000/yr./$2500 per semester) $.....
2. Itemized estimated need:
   a) Tuition/fees $ .....
   b) Books and supplies $ .....
   c) Lodging and transportation $ .....
   d) Health Insurance $ ..... TOTAL $ .....
3. Amount expected from alternate sources (please do not include loans)
   a) Personal funds $ .....
   b) Other scholarships $ .....
   c) Other grants $ ..... TOTAL $ .....
4. Are you dependent on your parents? YES ..... NO ..... Partially .....
5. Are you currently working? YES ..... NO .....
6. What is your/your household income bracket for the last tax year?

☐ Less than $25000 ☐ $25001 to $36000 ☐ $36001 to $48000 ☐ $48001 to $61000
☐ ($61000 to $74000) ☐ $74001 to $86000 ☐ $86001 to $99000 ☐ $99001 to $111000
☐ More than $111000.

7 Total number of persons dependent on this income .....
8. Total number of persons in this household, who are supported by this income who will be college students for this year. .....

Section E: Personal Statement

Please write a personal statement of up to 150 words addressing the following items (you may write it on a separate piece of paper).

1. What are your educational and career goals?
2. What are the reasons for your choice of your educational and career goals?
3. How will the current educational course help you achieve your educational and career goal?
4. What alternate sources of funding (other than loans) have you explored and what was the result?

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Section F: Your Educational Achievements

Please attach supporting documents for each item. Xerox copies are acceptable. Items 1 and 2 apply to all applicants. Item 3 is only for Talent based scholarships.

1. What was your GPA for the last semester? .....
2. What was your SAT score? .....
3. On a separate page please list all outstanding achievement, prizes, merit scholarships if you wish to be considered for talent based scholarship.

Section G: Checklist

☐ All sections have been filled appropriately and completely
☐ Section B has been signed and dated.
☐ Approval has been obtained in Section C.
☐ Letter/proof of acceptance to an educational institution has been attached.
☐ Previous semester's/course's GPA has been attached
☐ SAT score has been attached.
☐ You have made a copy of the completed application for your own records.
☐ You have written to Huzoor (Ata) requesting prayers.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the application. You can now mail it to the following address. *Jazakumullah*. May Allah bless you with success in your educational and career goals!

Secretary, Scholarship Committee
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
Bait-ur-Rahman Mosque
15000 Good Hope Road
Silver Springs, MD 20905

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM

Instructions for Section A.

Line 1. Please print, first, middle and last name.

Line 2. Please write your US Jamaat member code. If not available, please apply for one immediately and obtain before May 31. However, do not wait to get the code before sending application.

Line 3. Please write your social security number. If not available please write N.A.

Line 4. Please write the name of the parent who is head of your household. If you live on your own, simply write the name of your father.

Line 5. Please write your address where the check is to be mailed. Please notify us of any changes.

Line 6. Please write your email address where we can communicate with you.

Line 7. Please write your telephone no. where we can reach you. Please notify us of any changes.

Line 8. Please write the name of the college you are planning to attend. If this is pending, then write PENDING. However, this information will be needed before the scholarship can be paid to you.

Line 9. Please write the name of the course you are admitted to. If this is pending then write PENDING. However, this information will be needed before the scholarship can be paid to you.

Line 10. Please write the expected duration of the course in months starting from the current year.

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Instructions for Section C (For President/Regional Missionary).

Line 1. Please check yes or no in the appropriate column. If the member code is not available then please immediately apply for one and check pending. Membership code will be needed before May 31 for the application to be considered, however the application should be sent to the committee anyway.

Line 2. Please check yes or no in the appropriate column.

Line 3. Presidents/Missionaries are strongly urged to seek input of local Qaid/Lajna President and, if applicable, the chanda paying status of the applicant. However, lack of any one of these alone should not result in the disapproval of the application.

Line 4. Please check yes or no per your reasonable overview of the applicants financial status. This is only applicable if the application is for need-based scholarship. Checking 'No' does not disqualify the applicant from Talent based scholarship or educational loan.

Line 5. Please check whether you are approving or disapproving the application. If you have approved the application please return it to the applicant to submit it to the scholarship committee. **In case of disapproval, please submit the application yourself directly to the scholarship committee** and not through the candidate (address at the end). It is requested that you also inform us through our email address (scholarship_committee@yahoo.com) stating that you are sending us a disapproved application with the applicant's name. This would be appreciated.

Line 6. Please write comments explaining any item you have answered as 'NO'.

Instructions for Section D

Line 1. Please write the amount of scholarship/loan you are applying for (max. as noted before).

Line 2. Please delineate to the best of your knowledge an estimate of these expenses. These are the valid categories of educational expenses for which you can use the scholarship amount.

Line 3. Please list other sources you have explored and are available to you. Please do not list any loans. Please do not answer questions on line 4 through 8 if you are applying for a talent-based scholarship only. If you fill in this information you will automatically be considered for a need-based scholarship/loan.

Line 4. Please check yes/no whether you are financially dependent on your parents. If you do not live with your parents but receive some financial assistance from them, then check 'partially' (living away simply to attend college is excluded and counted as living with parents).

Line 5. Please check if you are currently working to support yourself.

Line 6. Please check the appropriate box for income. This figure should be the same as filed in the household's Federal Tax Form 1040 as the total gross income. You are not required to attach the tax form. Include your income if you are still financially dependent on your parents and working. Do not include your parents' income if you are only partially dependent on them, but only include the estimated financial assistance you receive from them plus your personal income.

Line 7. Please write the total number of dependents for the income listed in line 6.

Line 8. Please put in the number of people whose college education is wholly or partially supported by the income in 6. If a dependent's college education is totally supported by other scholarships or grants, please do not include them here.